

CINEMA

Papers



Mel Gibson in

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plus *Four Laps, We of the Never Never* and more

December 1982

Issue 41 \$3.50*

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 The Wolf
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 The Rose
 The Who
 Fighting Bird
 Jones 2
 Star Trek
 The Godfather Part II
 Fiction
 Missing
 Angels
 John's Restaurant
 All the Presidents Men
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 Butterflies
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Hip, hip, hooray

Dear Sir,

My one big work last week and the whole pleasant anticipation with which I reached for Graeme Pagan's mail was cut by his other preoccupation. However, when I read Scott Murray's column headed "Industry hysteria" my smile was reflected and I was ready to take an evening. Could I stop in for a hip, hip, hooray, say such as thinking and to having the gate to say what needed to be said.

I guess 100 out of 100 with almost everything that Scott said in this issue and I have not been a recognition of these same facts, first ordered by people of goodwill will have a chance of moving the industry toward more.

Let us hope that by next year the industry will be so improved and we will see 10 out of 10 or at least three. However, after all I have to report along with others that a demand good film won't hurt.

Yours sincerely
Gordon H. Burke
President

Misplaced accusations

Dear Sir,

Scott Murray's "Outcast" from "Industry hysteria" (Cinema Papers No. 10, p. 42), makes several points of extreme interest.

First, the point is well made that it is the quality of a film which determines its acceptance or rejection at a through all the differences, whether the film will have any chance of becoming better than those who argue that it is a failure for producers to require foreign sales with no-offer success and those who argue that contrary to the latter point that the producer is direct whether it is the distribution of the film or the office situation of a particular sale that produces the producer's decision to engage or not, nor whether that better point is to be sold.

It would be interesting to see the result of regular surveys of distribution officials from Australia. Such surveys would indicate better than any attempted correlation of box-office results with the presence or absence of foreign agents the extent to which such agents are in control of the industry.

The lobby is available through releases from producers in the industry in Australia. It is a pity that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

In an informal oral industry in the United States is not the same in the United States. By the same token, it should be clear that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

I think there is some evidence that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

Secondly, Scott Murray was right about all sorts of the industry and its position of the industry. I am sure that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

While I support the Group's general aim of promoting the Australian film industry, and its wish to extend the June 30 deadline imposed by Part B Division 100A of the Tax Assessment

Act, I can only endorse the usefulness of its attack on UAA and its representation of the effects of section 100A of the Act.

For all the Group's rhetoric about Australia being a free market, the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

UAA, which is a free market, the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

Finally, a release of the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

The whole point about UAA's position is that they do not rely on any special tax exemptions. The only difference between the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

It is not clear to me whether the Group is in fact a free market, the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

Section 100A of the Tax Assessment Act is a free market, the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

Why should Australians not be free to produce their own films and to be free to export them? The industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

Producers of certified Australian films have been given a major competitive advantage in that they can offer financial incentives to the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

They seem to be completely blind to the danger of the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

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The Sydney Corporate Affairs Commission has set the way in dealing the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

Some producers mentioned have been mentioned in my other column "Australian film producers, which was written July 1978. It is a pity that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

Of course, even those who would not mind to trust a week for the rule making time to be completed and mentioned by June 30 in order to qualify for production tax concessions in the case of imports, it is a pity that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

The June 30 deadline sometimes mentioned in my other column "Australian film producers, which was written July 1978. It is a pity that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

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Yours sincerely
John Buckley
San Diego

Strong statement

Dear Sir,

As Scott Murray in his "Outcast" from "Industry hysteria" in Cinema Papers' October issue (p. 42) implied that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States. The fact is that the industry in fact is often not the opposite of what it is. The lobby is a product of the industry and is cancelled or reduced from Australia to another country, as is the case in the United States.

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WE OF THE NEVER NEVER: A DRAMA OF IGOR EMPTY SPACES AUZINS

Pre-production

When did you start work on "We of the Never Never"?

I bought the screen rights to the book about five years ago. I was one of the thousands of people who were first introduced to it at school. It always had a resonance to me about the way of life in Australia.

What resonance is that?

I saw it as telling the story about the development of the Australian rural heritage. There is no doubt that much of what Australia is, and what we are, is because of our rural background. It is not the events, not the total scope, but the emotion of it — between races, between males and females, and between human beings and the countryside. *We of the Never Never* seemed to suit it up very well.

At what stage did Adams-Parkes become involved?

After P4 had a shooting script prepared and only a few months before shooting. But their involvement only went as far as the financing of it.

It was understood that it was my project, and my view of the book. They specifically included themselves from anything other than an advisory capacity.

I had discussions with Philip

Director Igor Auzins is interviewed by Debi Enker about his latest film, *We of the Never Never*, based on the novel by Jeannie Gunn.



Adams quite often. Philip is obviously very creative and talented, and the guidance he gave was valuable. Gerry Toppin, who is a producer of the film, was at the Victorian Film Corporation when I first started the project, and he has guided it through the years.

The film credits four producers: producer Hans Toppin, coproducer John B. Marras, executive producer (Philip Adams) and economic producer (Brian Keene). Why was there a need for four producers?

Philip, as executive producer, was in charge of the business end. As economic producer, Brian dealt with the land, water, day-to-day production area. Gerry became the

Left: executive producer Philip Adams and Auzins at Kippenbe: the set for the film's opening scene.



Above: Author-director Cameron (right), who plays America's Quaker savior, flirts the camera on film. Below: Captain Patrick McQuinn, played by Kevin Costner, stands on Jernigan. My of the North Point

actual mine producer when John Murrey [the original producer] parted company with us.

At what stage did Murrey leave the production?

John joined the production a few weeks before we were due to shoot, and he left perhaps one or two weeks into the shoot.

What caused his resignation?

I haven't discussed it with him and I don't know that my vague opinions would be worth outing, really. It was too busy at that time directing the film. However, for a producer like him, it may have been difficult to work with the fact that it was my project and that I was in creative control. But I really don't know and I don't think it would be proper of me to make suppositions. I wasn't involved with discussions that took place between the production company and John just before he left the production. Quite a number of people came and went during the shooting. My job at the time was directing, not being totally familiar with why people were coming and going.

You sound a little circumvent . . .

I am determined in this interview not to be rude to anyone, because the last time I did an interview for *Cinema Papers* vast sections of the industry wouldn't speak to me for months.

I always believe it is as difficult to avoid antagonism as answering questions that you can't talk to.

We sort of talk?

Yes, you know, people who interview and publish.

Why did you decide to shoot in the Northern Territory, with the problems of distance and isolation?

If the film is judged as successful, it will be to some extent because we were in the area where the story actually took place, and because we did, as individuals, experience honestly the same conditions that the real characters experienced. I certainly had a profound effect on the cast, just to be in the same place and to walk the same ground. Some of these went quicker to make that than others.

It is not easy working like that, obviously, but I think it is very worthwhile. The shoot was only 12 weeks and you can live through 12 weeks under almost any hardship. Perhaps one of the film's strengths is that it does have that edge of anxiety about it.

What was the original budget?

About \$2.5 million but I think we probably went about \$700,000 over that. Most of the excess was expended on transport, accommodation and the equipment. The cost of accommodation, for some reason or other, escalated while we were there. Transport costs had been underestimated, as had the

It while we were there, almost as if it were a foreign country.

Is that another reason why you decided to shoot on the actual location of the book?

Yes, and I think that judgment is probably justified by the result on film. I don't think we could have achieved the same look or feeling if we had shot the film just out of Shepparton with a few liberties and bits.

I don't see remote locations and difficult shooting conditions as unreasonable problems in a part of our work. It is part of the way filmmaking has always been. You don't always shoot in studios. Ultimately, it's probably no more difficult filming in the Northern Territory than it is filming in Fozzney or Kings Cross.

There must be a lot of differences in terms of the amount of the control you can have. You are subject to the weather, and you have all sorts of logistical problems to contend with . . .

Well, there shouldn't be those differences. One of our problems was that some of the pre-produc-



cost of obtaining materials and supplies. These three areas really took the film grossly over budget.

One of the complaints that Dan, a character in the book, makes is that only people, who don't really understand the setback, like telling bush stories. Do you think that the 12 weeks set there put you in a better position to understand what the book was about?

Yes, even though I had spent quite a lot of time there in the years of researching the story and writing the script.

It is a special part of the world. It has a spiritual quality. I think that some of the cast and crew felt

too on the film wasn't as tightly organized as it could have been. It is not absolutely the end of the earth in terms of distance. It should be possible to organize a film almost anywhere in the world and have it run smoothly. It just requires expertise and effective planning.

Screen Adaptation

What are the advantages and limitations of adapting a screenplay from an autobiography?

Peter Schickel, the screenwriter, could answer this better than I. But the limitations are enormous, particularly when adapting a

national classic like *We of the Never Never*. Obviously, we had to be aware of the possibility of severe criticism for changing a classic. Whether or not we will escape that, I don't know.

In this case, we decided to try to be faithful to the style and the intent of the book, and I believe we have been. Perhaps some people won't agree, but I like that, but I believe some people haven't read the book properly. Perhaps we haven't faithfully reproduced the tone and style of all the characters, but I think that we have been faithful to the intent of the book.

It certainly shows the attitudes of the other women, and it shows that she is a rebel of some sort. Obviously, it provides a contrast between city and country, and gives a contrast for the rest of the story.

The book is written in the first person. Did you ever consider using Jeanette as a narrator?

No, though we did consider re-writing it in the present day, because life in that part of the Territory has changed very little since 1902.

However, we judged that it

would probably be more successful and just as relevant if we retained it in a period story.

The relationship between Jeanette and Aemura (Arthur Dignam) is never explicitly developed in the book, and in the film it is emotionally misread. How do you create a feeling of intimacy between a couple who talk so little about themselves and their marriage?

I suppose the answer is that we understood them to be not particularly communicative about their own feelings and emotions as human beings. We learned that from her family in Melbourne.

But it wasn't really a story of their marriage as such. Their marriage was a catalyst for the other events of the story. It is an examination of roles and freedom, but not only of married roles and females. It deals with the whole existence of rural Australia as opposed to the women's existence.

I thought her reluctance in writing about emotions and feelings was a product of the time, of the sort of things that were acceptable for women to say at that time...

It was partly that, and partly because her husband had died only a year and a half after they were married. I don't think she'd really formed an advanced consciousness.

Left: the marriage bed, with Jeanette (Gina Lister-Jones) and Arthur (Dignam) from *We of the Never Never*.

about her position as a married woman.

How did the Glass family react to the film?

Generally they liked it. Some of them weren't absolutely comfortable with the two or three scenes between husband and wife that aren't in the book, because they tended to be confrontational scenes, and because they didn't remember her on her. But we felt those scenes were dramatically necessary.

Do you see any similarity between film like *"We of the Never Never"* and *"The Miss from Sweeney River"* and the American Western in terms of the exploration of history and the celebration of pioneers and folk heroes?

Yes. Those two Australian films and Westerns certainly seem to perform the same function, but not in the same way. Interestingly, a comment I heard quite often from distributors in North America was that perhaps *We of the Never Never* will fulfil the search American filmmakers have embarked on for a new form of American Western.

They identified with the aspects of independence and pioneering isolation, and with the drama of empty spaces. Films like *Long Riders* and *Barbarosa* are all part of that continuing search.

It appears that the Westerns from nowadays are a reflection of



What did you think in intention was?

I think Jeanette Glass's reactions for the book were to explore some of the harshness and peculiarities that she witnessed as her year in the Northern Territory. That exploration becomes almost a personal justification, on behalf of the white people of the outback of that time, for the way of life out there. It doesn't read like a personal story, but I believe it is a personal story.

I think she saw the man of the outback as brutal, lonely figure, and she wanted the book to be an explanation of that.

Why did you decide to include the opening scenes of the marriage preparations, the advice that Jeanette (Angela French McGregor) was giving and the reaction of the city women to her decision to go into the outback with her husband?

To set the scene for the film, to give it an immediate purpose and identity.

Do you think it shows a contrast between Jeanette's attitudes and the attitudes of the other women of the time?



America's urban society, whereas in *We of the Never Never* perhaps they are a Western form that doesn't have an edge of harshness and cynicism.

There seems to me to be a common theme in *We of the Never Never* and in "Sinner River" to do with the necessity to prove your worth in a harsh environment. I saw the hard-brooding actor as Acquisti "showing the men that he was competent" . . .



Acquisti holds the camera close to the faces of Jeanette and Jeanette when they meet. (The scene, along with all the others dealing with the stranger's arrival, death and burial, was cut from the film just after the world premiere and two days before the released release.)

It is a reality so those sorts of environments, even today, that unless you are competent you are a liability. The men expected Acquisti to do it, particularly given his background. He was a strange character: an adventurer, a geographer, a romantic, a seafarer, a florist — everything but a cattle station manager.

What about Jeanette's comment that she's a wallflower? You get a much stronger sense from the film than the book of a woman who is 30, who feels left on the shelf . . .

The concept of herself as a wallflower is taken directly from one of her letters from the Northern Territory to Melbourne, where she writes of herself as Plain Jane, the wallflower.

Clearly, Jeanette feels obliged to prove herself as an individual before the men on the station will accept her. Yet throughout the film you get the feeling that she is excluded and resented . . .

She was excluded from the broader range of the station society. She was expected to be a housewife. She wasn't the sort of lady to like that. She wanted to be accepted as an individual and not as a woman whose place is in the

Yet, it is an expression of the growth in sexual trust in the relationship between her and the men. She is still not an absolutely warm, open, contemporary relationship. It remains reserved and as shy as they would have been.

There are several scenes in the film which are crucial to Jeanette's character development but which seem quite different to the character charted in the book. The

one, but perhaps, as filmmakers, we were searching for some slightly more dramatic events. On several occasions we were advised that *We of the Never Never* just wouldn't make a film because it was altogether too unexciting, too unadventurous, too uneventful, to capture that's *Never Never* today. Frankly, I think it is an indication of how poorly people read.

After her conversation with Mac (Tony Barry), Jeanette is convinced that she must build the house as a prison for her, to keep her in her place. It secures her commitment and insecurity. Why does the film neutralize the conflict between Jeanette and the men?

Each of these questions is relative to whom we have created rather than taken from the book. The film needed a forward-moving structure, and we decided to use these devices. We had no other reason for straying from the book.

But the drama really changes her character. It makes her much more aggressive, more sophisticated, and even a bit sinister . . .

Certainly it is not an absolutely faithful reproduction of the lady as perceived in the book, though I would hope that it is not a ridiculous misrepresentation. We tried to ensure that our misperceptions were believable weaknesses of human behaviour, given the circumstances of the book.

A film can only possibly deal with a very small section of a year in the life of a cattle station. Sometimes we couldn't find the appropriate dramatic moment in the book and we modified some of the events or some of the responses for the structure of the film.

I had trouble with the scene where Jeanette states that she has no desire to touch the Aboriginals anything but is quite happy to leave them. She then proceeds to make Gough-Bro (Donald Stewart) wear trousers, and teach Don-Bro (Shirley Kelly) to eat with a fork . . .

Exactly. I am delighted you had trouble with that. We now those concerns and attitudes as something she had to work through for herself. She was a city bred, Edwardian lady with no special knowledge or understanding of other cultures. She had a certain emotional response to a situation, and believed that all humans behave as equal. She wanted to learn rather than to teach.

Yes, when it actually comes to a moment of how to do that, in the middle section of the film, she doesn't have the knowledge or the experience or the courage to offer anything other than traditional Edwardian gardening tasks for Aboriginals.

As a character she is by no

house. Once she proved herself, she was still just an individual woman and they had pre-conceptions of her position.

There seems to be a stronger feeling of warmth and humanity in the book. You feel that the under-stands the men and that they begin to understand her . . .

I don't think we suggest in the film that she doesn't understand them or that they don't understand her. Towards the end of the film the attempt is comfort that she receives from Dandy (John Jarratt) is an indication of the support that she describes in the book. I suppose that the dirt we took in the script was more concerned with the relationship between the whites and the blacks in the second half of the film.

One of Jeanette's major criticisms of the men is their inability to express their emotions to a woman. Do you think Dandy's tears at the end are an indication of her influence on them?

chapter dealing with the arrival of the fourth stranger is for Jeanette a demonstration of the bonds of marriage. Yet in the film it is her utterance of sadness from the male world. Why did you change its meaning?

We tried to describe something the film's describe. We tried to look at the events and suppose a personal, emotional response to them from her. She doesn't describe her emotional response to those events in the book. She describes the men's response. I think we have retained that as described in the book. We just tried to work through her response to being rejected in that way.

Yet, the effect of that scene is to make her seem resented, whereas in the book she is more accepting of the constraints of her life in the *Never Never* . . .

I would argue that the relationship we gave her was reasonable, human concerns and not that far from what she might have felt at the

series defensible. Her narration does some problems. Last in the film she questions her own mission, but we have to see it before it is worth questioning.

Is the conclusion at the end supposed to indicate a resolution of problems?

It is an indication of acceptance by some of the members of the group, a desire for control. But even that piece of intervention is basically unsuccessful because the white race overtop the situation.

Why is it necessary for them to get up in the middle of the ceremony and start shooting?

As their form of expression of aggression towards the black people of the time. I think that is a fairly accurate representation of how it was and it is intended. All we have to be able to do with the film was to have the audience ask itself one or two questions. We have no answers, only questions.

Occasionally the book is quite patronizing towards Aboriginals.



You in the film *Peterson* severely challenges the man's attitude that the Aboriginals are somehow subordinates. Did you choose that change to make people aware of the prevalence of racial attitudes?

It is not a change we made. That confrontation between Inezine and the man is described in the book. She respectfully suggests that the Aboriginals have better knowledge and better ability to see their country than whites. She says that the strange owner should share the produce of the mission with the Aboriginals. I think she was a non-racial person, she held very advanced views for her time as black-white relationships.

The book does read as a racist document sometimes, but we didn't believe that to be her intention. If we had, I don't think we would have made the film.

How difficult is it to depict attitudes that are racist and to differentiate these attitudes from the attitudes of the film?

I can't tell someone. Do you believe that the film takes a racist or a non-racist stand?

I think it shows that the men believe Aboriginals are heathens and subordinates. *Peterson* holds a different view at the beginning, moreover, finds that her actions are only causing conflict, and then leaves it at that.

You don't believe that there is any advance towards a third form of treatment of the Aboriginals just prior to her husband's death?

I suppose one of the things that perhaps the film ultimately says is that it is unattainable. In her case, we would suppose it is aggravated because she left the station. The work and the understanding that she as an individual, she and her husband as a couple, and, through them, the men of the station, accomplished was negated because their time at the station was over.

their own. We wanted a device that would convey the feeling that the Aboriginal people lived their own way of life, they saw sense of humor, their own priorities and their own sensitivity. I would suggest that that thought probably hasn't occurred to many white Australians. But a film is based on *We of the Never Never*, describing so many events, most terrible most of them, unfortunately.

If you must include events, what are you hoping to convey with the film?

Well, you hope the moments that you indicate are real and true. But they are not very deep indications of the situation—they can't be. Not necessarily in this film, but in any film. You are looking at a broad time scale, you have to be very specific about the events you select. You can't explore or background the moment adequately, can you?



I assume that through a whole variety of different techniques, without losing a literal time scale, it is possible to convey a sense of what has gone before and what will follow particular moments...

Perhaps our difficulties aren't exactly mounting. I consider that since you do fully explain and fully follow up, you have provided the experience of something. For me, *We of the Never Never* should probably run for about three weeks solid and then we might have been able to address ourselves to some of the things that we tried to indicate.

A film obviously isn't a definitive statement of any sort. It is an impression. It is an idea. It is hopefully an emotional and moving idea, but it is not a thorough explanation or explanation.

How did the Aboriginal actors in the film feel about the way they were being depicted? Did they contribute in any way to the creation of the characters?

They contributed to the creation of their characters, yes. They didn't contribute to the script's treatment and the script's concept of black and white to any great extent.

Were they satisfied with the way they were depicted?

Yes, the responses I have had were that they were delighted with the film. They believed we were going to advance understanding of them as human beings.

What about the Best-Best character? She is a peripheral character in the book, but a central one in the film.

Continued on p. 167

*Depicting Aboriginals in film. Above: Aboriginal women and children. Below: Aboriginals in traditional dress. Top right: *Peterson* and *Never Never*. Bottom right: *Peterson* and *Never Never*.*

Why did you use subtitles?

I don't think it is appropriate to have characters speaking a foreign language and not understand what they are saying, it is offensive. If we understood the whole character, I think we should also understand the black characters.

I found that the subtitles create an audience awareness of a complex Aboriginal culture of which the white characters remain ignorant...

Right. One of our intentions was to give the Aboriginal people a life and immediacy and culture of



GUILTY PLEASURES **THE FILMS OF PAUL SCHRADER**

Neil Sinyard

Paul Schrader is one of the seminal figures of the contemporary American cinema. His success is attributable to the creative use of his critical faculty and a commercial deployment of his Calvinism. The result is a body of work that is a bracing commentary on classic and modern Hollywood, and whose bleak vision would make *film noir* look like musical comedy.

Schrader's new film, *Cat People* (1982), is the first he has directed from someone else's script,¹ but, in every other way, it looks like a characteristic Schrader work. The lead role, Irene Galtier (Nastassja Kinski), is both a predator and a victim of her own nature, and, as such, she recalls Schrader's characterization of the heroine of Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* (1976) and *Raging Bull* (1980).²

As with *Taxi Driver* and with *Barbarian* (1977), the violence is closely linked to sexual repression. In *Cat People*, when a young keeper is attacked by a black leopard, there is a shot of his blood splashing at the heroine's feet, visually implying a link between feline ferocity and loss of virginity. The connection between sexuality and violence is spelled out by Irene's brother, Paul (Malcolm McDowell): "Every time you tell yourself it's love, but it isn't, it's blood. It's death."

The narrator of the tale, Oliver Yates (John Heard), is an repressed, the heroine, and sexual control is postponed not only because of Irene's fear of her sinister nature but also because of Oliver's apprehension about depicting a woman of perfection. The character is introduced as he is reading Dante, which augurs the film's ultimate descent into the underworld and the revelation of his character:

the creature as a romantic idealist in search of his Beatrice.

The comments Oliver very strongly with Michael Corleone (Al Pacino), the hero Schrader created for Brian De Palma's *Obsession* (1976), who is also a romantic obsessive, a man who kills the thing he loves and then builds a shrine for her. In *Obsession*, the Deane-Bearnes legend is alluded to quite explicitly.

Cat People and *Obsession* can also be compared because of their imaginative use of a New Orleans setting for metaphorical, melodramatic, and their concern with the taboo of incest which in both films transmutably seems to be the only form of sexual release that will preserve the characters' identity.

Like most of Schrader's films, *Cat People* is extremely violent. The sex is used to suggest that people are in their own private cages. In this film, as at the end of *American Gigolo* (1980), the two lovers are separated by fate, seeming to achieve an emotional affinity only when separated forcibly. The sex imagery is used also as a corrective to human sinners and, as Schrader puts it, "give him an out society now that there's a common belief under the outer surfaces of every person."

Similar imagery also pervades Schrader's screenplay for *Eat Drink and Be Merry* (1981), created for Paul Verhoeven, where Jake La Motta (Robert De Niro) screams, "I'm not an animal!"

1. By Alan Greenly, and based on the script for *Cat People*.

2. 1980 In *Deliver Us* (1980).

3. Schrader is credited as co-writer on *Raging Bull* with Martin Scorsese.



"I'm not an animal!", as he bounces his head against a brick wall.

The intense inner life of Schrader's characters is often signified by external aggression. Similarly, just as a Schrader character turns himself to pieces psychologically, he is also in danger of being torn apart physically, both from heat. One only has to think of the missing digits that settle the Schrader script for *The Yakuza* (1971) and *Taxi Driver*, the hero's right hand in *Rolling Thunder* (1977) that is thrown into the mechanical garbage disposal unit, the kniper's severed arm in *Cat People*, the most shocking broken nose in film history in *Raging Bull*, and, in that film, the whole way in which Jake's transience (man spending as moment) is signified by his ability to absorb extreme physical punishment.

Such brutality goes hand in hand with Schrader's momentary vision. One of the dubious achievements of *Cat People* is to give a whole new dimension to the word "gaze", as the black haired lenses disgusting evidence of its sensual presence. A hand becomes part of the message in *Rolling Thunder*. The damaged degree of Travis Bickle (Robert De Niro) in *Taxi Driver* is clear to New York by practical action, rather than by political persuasion, again distastefully when he starts the politician by declaring that, "The President should clean up the whole mess here, should flush it down the fuckin' toilet." The dense to clear and partly become indistinguishable from a desire to expose and annihilate.

One should be wary of identifying Schrader too closely with his characters, but there sometimes is an uneasy sense of his putting a comment he is afraid to acknowledge within himself into the mouth of an unbalanced protagonist.

This might account for the uncomfortable sense that however great some of the films, in *Taxi Driver* and *Thelma & Louise* or a hero's *Cat People* results. *Hardcore* in this way is least to become between inquiry and violation,

above, while John Cazale, director Paul Schrader and screenwriter Michael Korda, right, try to find out about the lives of the young man, John Cazale, who is in the back of a taxi. The film is set in New York City, the heart of the city. The film is set in New York City, the heart of the city. The film is set in New York City, the heart of the city.

between sexual consciousness and coy modesty. Schrader seems half-appealed, half-fascinated by the urban bath he evokes, and the film oscillates between inquiry, impulses of pleasure and punishment, Protestantism and permissiveness, purification and perversion. I am a little reminded of B. H. Lawrence's early response to Dostoevsky:

"He is as hot as the sun, shining down on him, in the shadows, and in order to bring to the light, profane love, all love. But his nose is sharp with heat, his mouth is shadowy and red-like, he is a will flood and dropped like a trap. He is not just."

It is wrong to say Schrader's ambivalence towards his taxi driver hero and his description of him as a man "who crawls through the city like a rat through a sewer."

Schrader might be called a junk-food Dostoevsky. Like Dostoevsky, he is violent, melancholic, religious and profoundly conservative. Like the Russian master also, he uses the tricky formulae of crime fiction to treat massive psychological dramas about self-accused people who struggle furiously between heaven and hell, and who find redemption through suffering and sacrifice.

The ultimate dilemma and is rarely a narrative resolution but inevitably a form of spiritual transcendence or trauma. One has only to think of the ironic and inevitable final moments of *Taxi Driver* or the spiritual rejection yet narrative disintegration that forms the conclusion of *American Gigolo*. "One thing I know that, whenever I was loved, was I not", is the epilogue for *Raging Bull*, following the ambiguous closing scene where Jake falls to himself in the mirror, either facing himself as





Travis Bickle (Al Pacino) in *Taxi Driver* with Iris (Faye Dunaway), Iris's mother (Cyndy Sherman), and a friend (John Cazale) in a scene from Schrader's *Taxi Driver*.



The search for a lost daughter: Bickle looks in a scene from his taxiquest, while watched by Andy Warhol.

his wife and daughter, but, after a remorseful 16 years, he is given a second chance to redeem himself through his reunion with a daughter who is also a surrogate wife figure. Destruction gives way to cerebral damnation to redemption.

Schrader's third cut for the drama could have been a compelling addition, but the film still is a remarkable celebration of Hitchcockian ambivalence, as important to the revelation of *Ventige* as one of the screen's misanthropes as is the criticism of Robin Wood and Dennis Spoon?

Obsession is a critical work of interpretive insight and not blind hagiography, and the fact the film takes implicitly toward the explosion away from Hitchcock as master of suspense and towards Hitchcock as misguided romantic and perverse psychologist.

A worthy key film from the same period, to which Schrader's work has added continuity, is John Ford's *The Searchers* (1956). Ford will be screenplayers to derive inspiration from this source. *The Vietnam Years*, *Rolling Thunder* and *Hardcore* *The Vietnam Years* from *The Searchers* the idea of a hero's quest is an alien world for a kidnapped girl, a quest which is also a form of self-discovery. However, *Taxi Driver* and *Hardcore* have heroes who see themselves as self-appointed Saviors journeying into the under world to save a girl from what they perceive as the lower depths, a racist mission that is also a journey into Hell.

Although *The Vietnam Years* only the equivalent narrative situation of *The Searchers*, the other film makes an attempt to explore the complex psychology of the Ford film. *Taxi*

© Robin Wood, *Mimetic's Film*, Collins London, 1984.
© Donald Spoto, *The Art of Alfred Hitchcock*, N. B. Allen, London, 1987.



These images of "a blood-spilling cinema that glorifies the violence of a disturbed mind" (from *Searchers*), a scene of violence in a hard world. Travis and Iris (Cyndy Sherman) in *Taxi Driver*, left; Victor La Motta (Cathy Neeley) in *Rolling Bull*, John and Michelle in *American Gigolo*.

Driver and *Rolling Thunder*, the *Searchers*, have psychotic heroes whose intrusions are nightmare images of their own unacknowledged wishes and innate violence. Their revenge becomes a kind of terrible purgation.

In the madness in *The Searchers* that makes Schrader the other element in this film which he has seeded and entered in its varied roots. *Rolling Thunder* attempts to confront this issue by having Charles Rice (William Devaney), an ex-Vietnam POW, as the hero who sees the gang that attacked his home and murdered his wife as the equivalent of the Vietnamese whom he was prevented from fighting by his capture. His revenge thus becomes an elaborate compensation and a re-enactment of a personal secret fantasy, rather in the manner of Ethan Edwards' (John Wayne) vendetta against the Indians in *The Searchers* who have ravaged the woman he secretly loved. However, with John Ford's dramatic softening Charles into a nice guy ("which would be the equivalent of joining the character in *Taxi Driver* a dog"), Schrader has used *Rolling Thunder* now looks less like a film about a racist than a racist film.

The *Driver* is more uncompromising. It includes a tender scene between Sport (Harvey Keitel) and the underage prostitute, Iris (Cyndy Sherman), which is the equivalent of a scene often misquoting in *The Searchers* but never showing the life together of Ben (John Wayne) and Debbie (Natalie Wood). Was it really an inescapable tragedy or was their tenderness and even love there? Ford seems no more willing than he has to confront these possibilities. Schrader and Schrader crosscut that "cut" scene with that of Travis' preparation for his own private war that will lead sensually to his revenge of Sport and Iris' coup. The nervy oscillations between Travis and Sport in *Taxi Driver* are not di-

similar to those of Ethan and Scar in *The Searchers*.

As well as exposing some of the racist mores that the earlier film cited, *Taxi Driver* is also a modern reflection on the efficacy of heroes, madness, prejudice and ingrained violence embodied in the Western of which Ford's film was the supreme achievement. For the first time Ford, in *The Searchers*, is profoundly ambivalent about these attitudes and values. The bloody denouement of *Taxi Driver* powerfully dramatizes their savage legacy, and their fearful logic.

The other 1956 Hollywood classic which Schrader has revisited in his films is *On the Waterfront*. Schrader's debut as writer and director, *Blue Collar* (1978), is full of references to Elia Kazan's film, called out in a verbal confrontation between Jerry Waddock (Harvey Keitel) and Zerk Brown (Richard Pryor) that is almost word for word a repeat of the slugging match between Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) and Johnny Friendly (Lee J. Cobb) that presaged their fight. But, significantly, *Blue Collar* is politically more accurate than *On the Waterfront*, more detailed in its observation of men in work shops in an observation of shop-floor politics, more cruel in its imagery (the retail worker who is reflected in a haze of blue paint spray) and more honest in its exposure of the limits of individualism.

Kern's apocalyptic ending has now been dramatically indicated by Schrader. Kern's conclusion, for the Informer in McCarthyism America has been proved by Schrader to what is not as a specifically Marxist conclusion. The final image freezes the men at the point of confrontation and we hear again the film's message: "They put the films against the new boys, the old against the young, the black against the white, to keep us in our place."

Rolling Bull alludes directly to *On the Waterfront* in the final scene when John La Motta (John Cazale) meets Terry Malloy's famous speech: "You don't understand - I could have had this town. I could have been a senator." Both films have heroes who are punch-drunk ex-boxers moving toward some form of redemption and who have a relationship with a blond teenage dancer that themselves but representing a desired vision of general emancipation, a state of solace in a hard world. Both heroes have a less-than-ideal relationship with other workers who see him their managers and who ought to have looked after them better.

But the differences between the two heroes are more striking than their similarities. The conclusion of *Searchers* and Schrader is *On the*

© Co-argued with Leonard Schrader



Waterfront and their continuation of an asexual 1950s hero in *La Motta* illustrates, by contrast, the essential romanticism of the 1990s screen hero and how such postmodernism has changed during the past 25 years or so. *Waterfront*'s hero represents the conclusion of a typical rebirth of the '30s, *De Niro*'s that of the aborted rebirth of the '70s. *Waterfront* is a rebel without a cause. *De Niro* is a rebel without a brain. *Waterfront*'s solution to what he sees as corruption in *On the Waterfront* (standing in court, fighting the military) seems pitifully conventional when compared with *De Niro*'s asexual and bloody resistance in *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*.

These new heroes are not antipathetic students or angry young men. They are heroes who challenge any attempt at idealism or moral approval. (As a British critic observed, *Raging Bull* could be subtitled "Somebody Up There Hates Me.") They reflect a contemporary cynicism and skepticism about heroism and western heroes and their morality is personal, private and idiosyncratic.

If a film such as *Raging Bull* can be read as Schrader's critical commentary on the changing face of screen heroism since the 1950s, his remake of *Cat People* equally reflects negatively the different conventions of representing violence, sexuality and perverse psychology. Jacques Tourneur's 1942 version is all atmosphere, traces and implications; Schrader's is explicit and erotic. Although the film pays tribute to two of the classic sci-fi plots of the original (the person in the park, the swimming pool scene), Schrader is in some ways closer to Hitchcock than to Jacques Tourneur. The film particularly recalls *Marnie* in its self-conscious use of color (the association between blood-red and loss of innocence), its frank sexual imagery, and its allusions to sexual behavior to convey the heroine's frenetic sexuality and the hero's odd and detached perception of the female sex.

Given Schrader's cynicism, such analogies are probably not accidental. But Schrader's cynicism is of an altogether different kind from that of, say, Peter Bogdanovich. He does not simply compose a series of elegiacs; he returns to his favorite films. The references are incorporated into an auto-critique of the genre. They are not nostalgic, but intellectual. Their function is not simply to reflect but comparative and restorative. *Obsession* reexamines *Veronica* as a film of profound feminine psychology. *Taxi Driver* pays tribute to *The Godfather* but also extends it and rejects it for a new age in terms and subversive identity (see *Veronica* above in this volume). *Blue Collar* and *Raging Bull* critique and revise the political message and rhetorical heroism of *On the Waterfront*. *Cat People*, by alluding to the original and to *Marnie*, becomes



a critical essay on the changing fashions of cinema in reflecting horror, demagogue and sexual tension.

If Schrader's film concerns on film history, they also create it and become part of it. Indeed, any critical history of Hollywood in the past decade would have to give substantial attention to Schrader. He has collaborated with esteemed film buffs such as John Milius (who produced *Hombre*), De Palma and, in particular, Scorsese. His career has also intersected with two significant but overlooked figures of the decade, such as Sydney Pollack (two remakes) and Schrader's raw screenplay for *The Yakuza*) and *Twilighters* (who gave a liberal feminist plot in *Old Boyfriends* to the

radical feminist melodramas of Schrader's early 80s). He did a fine draft of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* which Steven Spielberg later rejected. Indeed, it is tempting to think of Schrader and Scorsese's floating yellow taxi-cab (in the first shot of *Taxi Driver*) and Spielberg's floating yellow spaceship in *Close Encounters* as the two most recent emblems of the decade. They represent the cynicism of movies and image that were Hollywood's chief box office assets during the radical 1970s.

For all this, Schrader seems to stand apart from what seems most memorable or characteristic of the so-called Hollywood renaissance — from Scorsese's *Schic* *Cat People* to *Miami Vice* and *Top Gun*, from the horror remakes of *De Palma* to *The Usual Suspects*. Of *Veronica*, Schrader looks like a slightly cold, calculating cynic. How would one assess his achievement to date? Is there still a sense of a vacuum between the quality of his intelligence and the coherence of his achievement? Or why?

A clue might be found in his creative milieu. When teaching screenwriting at an American university, his advice to his students, apparently, is "Cultivate your screeners; you never know when they might come in handy." For the past decade or so, he has done that very successfully. But the danger is one of morbid anticipation, of a screenwriter looking to move than creatively engaged.

With directorial remakes of the caliber of Scorsese and *Twilighters* (the success of the wheel in *Taxi Driver* and *Old Boyfriends* can be contrasted with some objectivity. That's mostly to Scorsese, *Taxi Driver* becomes something of a loose document and not simply



Jerry Bruckheimer (Honey Bees) in the car scene *Blue Collar*



Jerry and John Brown (Michael Pratt) in the work scene *Blue Collar*



Above, from outside the doorway a sign: *Oh People, They Say It's Not a Movie, It's a Life*. Below, Schrader in his role as a taxi driver

the diary of a madman. *Blue Collar* also avoids melodramatic patterns by introducing its social context and splitting its focus of interest among three main characters. But the identification with the hero of *Blue Collar* keeps the film in it impossible to decide whether we are meant to explore or endorse Jake Vanclough's (George C. Scott) increasingly-violent behavior.

The film we are drawn into Schrader's frame of mind, the movie has drama for certain aspects of modern propensities: leaders on the aggressive and the generous. This is something which also defines *American Gigolo* in its hostile attitude to men and Negroes, not to mention any Negroes.

Schrader's presentational method, which he encourages in his pupils, is to think of our dominant emotion that is ruling. We live it that moment and then find a dramatic metaphor that corresponds to that emotion. The example he often uses is *Taxi Driver*, the inspiration for which derived from Schrader's personal feelings of loneliness and isolation and which were converted into the metaphor of a taxi driver cut off from human contact by the glass. It explains why Schrader's characters seem to belong in a peculiar twilight zone between psychological realism and poetic metaphor. The roles they assume define for Schrader their professional function in society (taxi driver, psycho) and a symbolic function in his particular view of the world (taxi driver as a symbol of urban alienation, gigolo as icon of



dark, lonely, loveless Los Angeles)

Perhaps his greatest gift is precisely his intensive capacity to summon forth images of subtle suggestiveness even before being asked out in narrative form.

Nevertheless, this method clearly has limitations for Schrader, inasmuch as whether it would work for anyone else. It is a gift more appropriate to an isolated poet than a narrative dramatist. Schrader is much better at exposition than development, and the weakness of the basic idea sometimes dominates in the machinery of narrative devices like, for example, the gift of the box of the hero's witness to *Hiding Thunder* or the first shot of the Viet Cong.

Hardcore has a brilliant premise: George C. Scott's anti-persona as a crusader against the pollution of conservatism and traditional values in *Hags, Big of the Husbands, The American*, and more recently, *Taxi* is powerfully evoked.

The moral stance — the thin line between freedom and exploitation, the heroism, having so defined his way of life to the prostitute, and the other way round — are personally explosive, but Schrader has no real idea how to translate these into a dramatically convincing context. Vanclough's home life might explain why the daughter disappeared — it does not explain why she went into porno film. The mid-section, where Vanclough poses as a trendy film producer to cheat them and win, is fearfully unconvincing on any level. Attempting to be an elegant extension of the new morality, the film looks like a pornography version of *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*.

Blue Collar has a weaker cruder structure, its political strength somewhat diluted by domestic sentimentality and the convoluted diversion of a super film plot. *American Gigolo* never quite pulls off its American vagabond, largely because that theme the whole verge onto the film's weakest area: the hero's relationship with the producer's wife.

Old Boyfriends has a promising concept — the reevaluation of one's present through a direct encounter with one's past — but no clear strategy and no real psychology. Why should the become believe that the process of rediscovery will result from a reunion with former boyfriends rather than, say, ex-girlfriends? (The obvious answer would be that it compensates and confirms Schrader's con-

servative puritanism.) What kind of because is it who, professing to be a clinical psychologist, dresses a married young man in his best brother's clothes before allowing him, and that is probably destined to learn that it appears to have done him some harm? It is hard to decide whether the film is about adjustment or regression, or whether to add film about a yearning for childhood innocence has convinced us as an occasion film about developing adulthood.

The turning point in Schrader's career might have been when he turned down an offer from RKO to become a regular film critic and instead wrote a screenplay. Schrader has always been naturally ambitious and it might be that he came into the studio and too easily so. The impression he has given since is that of an artistic instability skipping too willingly to a commercial musician. He has mastered the complex economy of modern Hollywood, but it might be at the expense of his own sense of human complexity.

What thinking of Schrader, I always think of is *What is Obsession* when the daughter, distraught in choosing her father with whom she has become emotionally involved, would like to be well with her daughter, how he will live. "It's a little late for emotional questions, darling," she is told bluntly. "Just take the money. Believe me, it'll help you to forget!" That is the question mark over Schrader's career. Is it too late for him to return to the questions of obsession? Is the money helping him to forget? *

Filmography

- Screenplay**
 1971 *The Subject* (as scripted with Robert Towne)
 1972 *Taxi Driver*
 1974 *Obsession*
 1975 *Blue Collar* (scripted with Howard Gould)
 1976 *Old Boyfriends* (scripted with Leonard Schrader)
 1977 *Blue Collar* (scripted with Leonard Schrader)
Director
 1971 *Blue Collar* (also co-scripted with Howard Gould)
 1972 *Obsession*
 1973 *Blue Collar* (also co-scripted with Leonard Schrader)
 1974 *Blue Collar* (also co-scripted with Leonard Schrader)
 1975 *Blue Collar* (also co-scripted with Leonard Schrader)
 1976 *Blue Collar* (also co-scripted with Leonard Schrader)

Geoffrey Gardner talks to 'vagrant'



filmmaker

PETER TAMMER



Peter Tamm has been making films for two decades. Throughout that time he has made films largely using his own resources and equipment. In many senses he is the most genuinely "independent" filmmaker in Australia. This is not necessarily by choice (on the ironic final credit of *Mallacoota Stampede* indicates), but the failure to find government funding has not, as it has with others, deterred or prevented him from pursuing his craft.

Independent film has various connotations. It stands for many adjectives used to describe certain aspects of filmmaking practice: "Oppositional", "radical" and "alternative" are words fashionable in this context. "Experimental" and "avant-garde" are now less popular. There is a wealth of meanings and nuances.

The situation of independent filmmaking in Australia is similar to that in other western, social democracies. At the core of this activity is government funding via state-established funding bodies and/or state television. Financial support may entirely or partially cover the budget, usually on the basis that the filmmakers and any other personnel involved are prepared to work for near subsistence wages, and on the expectation of nil or marginal financial returns.

There is a certain irony, then, that what is described as independent filmmaking is in fact heavily dependent on government funding to produce, often, films opposed to the views of the political masters of those agents of the governments which make funding available.

The situation has been succinctly summarised by Sylvia Harvey in her pamphlet *Independent Cinema?* (West Midlands Arts, 1978):

"Given the present system of social relations and of relations in the cinema only the very wealthy are 'independent'. Without the private means not only to finance a film project but beyond that to buy up a few cinemas in which to show the film, or at the very least a few projectors with which to show it, no filmmaker is 'independent'. Rather, what we need to understand and analyse are the complex series of dependencies which characterise the position of the non-commercial filmmaker. What must be emphasised is the fact of dependence on whatever system of finance presents itself. 'Independents' are part of an economic system which constrains and to some extent controls their production. The important question then becomes, from what that dependency, what are the possible areas of action, the possible areas of freedom within the larger constraints?"

In the case of Tamm, the fact that he has operated with a measure of self-inflicted financial independence in making films on laughably small budgets has meant that he has been entirely free to pursue his own notions of film form. It is safe to say that as a result of this freedom his films are unique, operating by Tamm's own methods and laws.

I would not count him as a "natural" filmmaker. His methods do not have any smooth grace. Poverty of means produces work that is rude and abrupt in the confrontation between subject and audience. At their best and most effective, they rely on a sense of shock that derives from an interest in the subject and from the way that Tamm attacks that subject. It is always a frontal attack.

Tamm's most recently-completed film, *Journey to the End of Night*, is so far his only work to have a broad public impact mostly through extravagant press reaction to the revelations of its subject. Overseas film festivals are now showing interest. A breakthrough into commercial exhibition would seem to be mandatory.



In the films you made through the 1960s and early 1970s there is a quite eclectic range of topics. The one common thing is that you have chosen people who are as close as you can come to being authentic.

Eccentricity is a bad word because it is pejorative, it has a feeling of somebody being a nut. I don't think of someone like Danny Cravner or Ray Robinson that way. They are remarkable people.

The only time I have made a film about a real individual was *Danny Cravner in Seattle's the Matter*. But I don't think of *Danny* as an eccentric so much as a ypp who had a franky acceptability, to which I was attracted. I was actually scared when I was doing the filming and I didn't know who was going to be the outcome. It took me six months to realize that instead of *Danny* being in only one scene on the film, he was the whole film. Mark Gillispie, who was to be the centre, became an audience to the event. I identify with the same sort of anxiety that Mark was showing in the film.

What attracts you to your subjects?

I don't have a rule. I don't look for specific qualities. When I meet a person who has some remarkable attribute, as with *Myra Roger* or *Ray Robinson* or *Bill Neave*, I am attracted to making films which reflect their personalities and report their lives. But I have always tried to do more than that. For example, I was very nervous when making *Myra's* in *You Mr Robinson* with *Gary Peterson* that we were also making a portrait of ourselves as vagrant filmmakers. That is very clearly in the film for those who care to read it. We didn't go out of our way to state it, but it was in the footage, so we left it in.

What does the term "vagrant filmmakers" mean?

I don't see myself as part of the canonized of film establishment in a conventional sense. I am an independent filmmaker who will continue to make whatever films appeal to me, regardless of the financial conditions at the time. Now, that doesn't mean that I don't have aspirations to make feature films, it just means that when I do, I imagine I will be operating as an independent filmmaker and not as part of a general industry system.

I prefer to work with standards completely different from those exposed by the industry. I do not want to work with large crews, large budgets or costs of thousands. I want to work on an intimate scale.

You have called this form of work "portrait films", making a distinction with what others call documentary as "kings". How do you see that distinction?

I see my films as one of the aspects of documentary. They can loosely be called bio pics or biopics, but the normal understanding presupposes films about people of public note. You might get a film made by the BBC about Dame Edith Sitwell or a documentary on the life and work of Greta Wallis, including an interview with her. That is the traditional documentary genre.

Now, some are equally portraits. They have elements of documentaries, but they are different in approach and style from the honest style of television documentary makers, who, with few exceptions, include a narrative. There are very few films in the bio pic line of documentation that I look at with great relish, one is *Gary Gaudin*. What I like about that film, and what people have responded to in my earlier films, is that the characters speak for themselves. The filmmaker mediates what the characters show themselves to reveal.

With *Gary Gaudin*, the Menzies brothers established a trust with two brothers, who reveal themselves to the world at large. I found that an absolutely staggering, breathtaking documentary. But, of course, it is so different from traditional documentary because of the absence of a voice of God dictating the sort of things that the audience should pick up on. The audience is left total freedom to pick up on what it wants.

That is true of *Heidi's* too. *You Mr Robinson*, much more than it is one of *Journey to the End of Night*, although *Journey* still has some of that quality. I have stated on that film things such as questions.

The Napier film came out of the cinema verite school, and there has been a lot of discussion about whether the camera is influencing the people to perform before it. In your films, one suspects there is a great deal more performance, in *Myra's*, *the Matter*, *the Matter*, for instance, than in an attempt of anonymous performance posing as which is being encouraged simply by the presence of the camera...

There is a great difference between the amount of performance encouraged by me as a filmmaker with Mark and Danny in *Seattle's the Matter* and the amount of performance encouraged by me in *Journey*. The *Myra Roger* and *Ray Robinson* films would fall in between those two extremes.

I take as a basic departure that people will not be absolutely natural in front of a camera. They will not only reveal qualities about

themselves they want revealed, but qualities they don't. That's inevitable.

Now, how much one pushes a person in that circumstance has to do with the aims and purposes of a film. *Myra*, for example, was uncooperative but in so way as nearly as co-operative as *Ray*, who was in no way as co-operative as *Bill*.

Bill was the one with the greatest sense of having a story to tell. He was the one who most wanted his story to be heard. He believed it was of great significance.

Quite often I would say to *Bill* things like, "Okay, let's set up a scene now. I want you to talk about going down in the Tol plantations, and using some bodies of your mind that you might know from going a couple of weeks ago and put down the real two days ago. I want you to live through that moment again." He would then do so.

I might have to do three takes on that because the first two days I have that quality of really revealing, but the third one did. I am not saying that three were my first takes in the film — 40 or 50 per cent are first takes — but 30 per cent are third, fourth or fifth takes.

The best example of that was the last take in the film, where *Bill* talks to his mother and God and his sister Steve, who died after watching *Bill* tell the Japanese the day before. In that scene, I spent an hour and a half on it, and it was a 30-minute take on film.

The first three takes were totally useless and it was costing \$80 apiece. I was spared of here for I was pushing him because I was pretty broken up watching him go through it. But even though I had the quality of disturbing him immensely, it did not come over in grace as it was in the final take, which it is in the film. That is devastating in its power because he lost himself in a trance, which he hadn't done in the first three takes.

Now, I didn't take that approach with the *Danny Key* film, which is equally powerful. That was a mercy.

You started making films liberally out of your own pocket. How much of this was an instinctive way of working?

It has always been instinctive at the level that I want to make films and, if funds are not available through other channels, then they become available through my own resources. Therefore, I have had to make films on pocket money budgets.

Melanie Stamper is the most expensive film I have made. Its total cash budget was \$23,000 for 60 minutes. I put up \$18,000, and got a \$2000 Creative Development Fund editing grant. The true budget for *Journey to the End of Night* was about \$17,000 for 74 minutes.



1. A Woman of Our Time, 2. Heidi to You Mr Robinson and Journey to the End of Night respectively

All my other films have been cheaper, down to home movies like *Our Luke and Flax*, which cost me in the vicinity of \$100 and \$500 respectively.

Mallacoota Stampede

Did "Mallacoota Stampede" start life as a documentary?

No, *Mallacoota* was always meant to be a mixture of styles. The first level is sexuality observation, with people doing casual things, such as parking their cars in carport parks and hanging into people in the process of doing it, or a two-year-old kid peeing his pants off a streetbank in a canoe. Sometimes they are aware of the camera sometimes not.

The second level was meant to be a narrative structure in which two events go on simultaneously, hence *stamped* *stamping*, the country boy. In fact, two complete movies were written and a full cast was prepared. But because of budget problems, we didn't get as many scenes shot as we intended. I could have completed a 100-page expanded edition, even feature length, had I money to go back and do some extra shooting. But I couldn't raise it before everyone disbanded.

Then there was a third level, where things were set up with the air of possibility. Take the motel scene, with Wendy and Michael, the drag queens, and Donny and Larry. We discussed all the possibilities that scene could take. Then I just set up the camera and lights, with Ki Gayer doing the sound, and said, "Okay, now we're going to go into it." We shot that last of film which is 11 minutes, and that's the scene!

The intensity comes from its portrayal of Larry's embarrassment. Larry allows his embarrassment to show through in his graceful, country-boy style. His natural personality comes over and he doesn't mind showing that he is embarrassed. It is beautiful! Of course, it also owes a lot to Michael's natural coquetry.

"Mallacoota Stampede" gives the impression of improvisation. Does much of it did you plan?

The setting of the people who come from the city was done in two or three weeks before shooting. We even had some rehearsals in town. The country boys were only introduced to me on the day of my arrival at Mallacoota, by John Archer, the production manager. None of them had acted before, not even in school theatre.

I took a punt down there and tried them out with bits and pieces. I had out who had a personality suited to a certain character. It was

either all or nothing at that stage.

So, yes, it was a conscious decision that we were going to put people who had acting ability with some who had none. Michael Rhodes had acted in student films at Swinburne, Kerry Grant had a dramatic course behind her, and Debbie Conway had parts in many commercials but no other screen acting at that stage.

Of course, Wendy and Michele, the two drag queens, had done many shows, but they are not performers in the style of film actors. Wendy, for example, was good doing repeats with an audience, but had never acted in a film. She didn't know how to do things actors would know how to do.

It is difficult to be able to measure and deliver a performance, but run along the way and things like that. As some of the people were really experienced as film actors, I had to modify the direction and performance to one standard. I went for long takes and tried to find the actors as it was happening, hoping that there were not too many continuity errors. I wanted the actors to get into a wind-up situation.

Unless it was budget, why did you choose to film like that?

Partly because I like to make films that have people questioning whether it is performance or whether it is a documentary of observation. In fact, one of the things I am very happy about in *January to the End of Night* is that a few people have asked me, "Does Bill really go around talking to himself like that all the time?" I would have thought that the fact it was artificial would have jumped out at them.

How do you expect people to react to this sort of sluggish, dramatic quality of the acting, acting that would be perceived by many as an experiment?

The most difficult moment required of an inexperienced actor in *Mallacoota Stampede* would have been the scene between Tom Fox, who played the father, and Debbie Conway at the back of the van. He is coming to the realization that the girl grows up and is about to leave home. He did that on one take, and he had never done anything on film before those two days. He did it with such power and conviction because it came out of his own experience. In an actor as he is not a person, and where is the difference?

It is not so much what is in the scene but whether, with its acting quality, it looks real in the context of how people judge film acting today...

I can answer that only by taking the completely opposite tack.



Top: Michael (Michael Rhodes) and Debbie the morning after. Above: Michael, Debbie and Kerry (Kerry Grant) in debate at the hotel. Below: Wendy and Debbie at the Mallacoota Stampede. *Mallacoota Stampede*



Imagine I was lucky enough to work with whom I consider to be the best actors in Australia. I believe I could still make my style of film, with the laissez-faire I want and the optimism they want.

Can there be a confusion between what an amateur actor will give you, naturally, and what a professional actor will do by the nature of his training?

That confusion will be eliminated if a professional actor were ever described as an amateur actor, and they both be the crumb of the performance. That is an indefinable thing. But it is what conceives you to against what does it. What I can't tolerate is performance that is not working, whether the actors are amateur or professional.

into the remembrance of the war, in the living rooms, when he is obviously on his own.

That is disconcerting for the audience, which is at a loss to understand what is going on...

I don't believe the scene at the memorial was strictly fictional, though I regard it as having a fictional quality. In a sense it is representative, like the other scene of him writing up in the night and walking around the house until he gets to the kitchen and finds some pills.

I suppose those two scenes are fictional, but they have a verisimilitude. Even if he hasn't been to the war memorial before, he has been there in his mind. Even if getting up to the night has a representative

fine truth because I don't believe that Bill has revealed the truth of every event, that he takes you through. It is only true insofar as it was true for him at the time, and that it hasn't changed too radically in the 40 years of remembering.

Now, while some of those events have gained greater importance and clarity, some have receded and taken on a sort of misty quality. Others have changed slightly because of people he has talked to in the past, who have suggested things to him.

What gives the film its interest is a constantly shifting reality at work where truth and nature and fiction and performance all come together on the screen. That is why I think you are probably right to call it a portrait film...



A well-known photograph of Neave



Bill Neave in a charge during the war in New Guinea



Neave as seen in *Journey to the End of Night*

the *End of Night*, which was written after World War I.

Now, that brings me to the second layer of intention. *Journey* and the "Book of Job" are about characters in the same style as Bill Neave, human beings who have been tested beyond the normal level of endurance. They are about their attempts to come to terms with it in different ways.

Now, I see Job's way, the biblical way, being essentially different from Bill's. And Celine's way is altogether different from both. That is, all are similar at some level. They are all broadly asking, "What is the purpose of existence? Why do I want to live? Why do I carry on through this shit, this wall of tears?" They all come up with different answers. Bill's answer is very religious because he believed that God was a personal God looking after him. I don't share that view. I see some echoes towards Celine's atheism and his sense of everything in the world taking us through nightmare beyond comprehension. They have no answers, no justification.

According to Celine, we are going through a terrible existence which is difficult for us to understand. But at least we can be honest about that and acknowledge it.

Someone like Bill takes the other approach and says, "I can't understand it, therefore it is better than me. It must have been ordained by God that it should come to pass, but I can't even really believe that." So, therefore, he is in despair: "How could I have been saved by God and then gone back and become a murderer?" Celine says, "It is absurd, man! It's just the way it is. Accept it!"

You would obviously reject the notion of various reviewers that the quotes are simply passages of prose...

There has been a good string of words, pompous, pretensions, portentious, longwinded. Basically they add up to one word: unnecessary. That just means they use the film as being only about what Bill Neave says, and not about what the filmmaker felt. In this sense, they have said, "We don't want to know what you think about it, we only want to know what he has to offer", which is their right.

But I felt I was giving them much more. I felt I was giving them a view of relief from the story that would throw it into a wider context, a broader, universal perspective. Beyond Bill's personal experience, and challenge them at a level of their own cultural experience. It may well have failed to do that, but I believe it is close to do that.

I was never interested in making the film to support only Bill's

Continued on p. 383

Journey to the End of Night

The genre has deteriorated to the inevitable nature of Bill Neave's story in "Journey to the End of Night", not on how it is told. I think we should concentrate on how it is told. We are talking about a number of difficulties in this film. First, you have to stop and consider how much of what happens is a performance; for the camera and how much of it is a deeply life experience that you just happened to record. The film starts with a sequence which to me denotes fiction: out of the darkness appears a man in his pajamas, who leads us to the memorial. It then cuts to close-ups of the man breathing down and crying. Then we are led back from there into everyday country-town life and slowly the man starts crying memories...

No, when he is on his own, he automatically releases the memories. There is a scene with his wife and son talking about putting her on the ration. Then a past straight

quality, he has been doing that for 40 years.

One is more documentary than the other. The pill in the night is a representative attempt to place a documentary reality. The material was a fiction in a sense because I don't believe Bill had ever been to the memorial at night, until that night. I asked him to do it because I knew that he has been unable to come to terms with 40 years of memory and pain. The only way I could represent it was these two scenes.

So, I was attempting to represent something that is normally a true, but which extremely tiny have fictitious qualities.

Is there a deflection in the film between a sort of objective truth and a truth that comes out of the recreation of what Bill Neave has gone through?

The whole film is a recreation.

What we are looking at is what is coming out of his mind and we have no idea about the truth of that...

Right. I don't believe in objective

I found narrow, arbitrary definitions. I believe every film poses new realities and my good film, my film that I respect, challenges us on a multiplicity of levels including the things you have just mentioned, such as where does the power lie truth of a film?

Francis Rose's film, for instance, have learned me from the times I have seen them. In a sense, they are documentaries made in a literary mode, but they are still very powerful documentaries. Why treat them and call them either a feature film or a documentary? They are a wonderful hybrid, and I like hybrid films.

The questions and film inter-spected throughout "Journey" obviously provide some commentary on Bill Neave's state of mind. But do you see them to more than that?

They are meant to have a real-life function. The first level was to break up the story and to throw events into a repetitive order. Then, as you know, two separate sets of quotes, from the "Book of Job" and from Celine's *Journey to*

THE Eftée LEGACY

Chris Long

Where should film history research begin? Surely the start should be made with the films themselves, for the final evidence of their successes and failures. Would it be possible to make an objective judgment of the work of a filmmaker without first seeing a major part of the output?

Director Raymond Longford provides a good example of this conundrum. Of the 38 silent films that Longford directed, only *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919), *On Our Selection* (1920) and a part of *Margaret Calcutt* (1911) survive. These were purportedly among the best of Longford's output. No total overview of Longford's work can be made.

A researcher in film history research was fortunate in Sydney to see the majority of Longford's direction over that of the McDougall team following screenings of *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919) and *The Chatter* (1920). Comparing two films of such vastly differing genre is questionable. But comparison of Longford's best film with the least successful of the McDougall output is totally unreasonable.

By many accounts, the best of the McDougall's films was the powerful anti-war satire *Two Minutes Silence* (1913). Like so much of Australia's film heritage, *Two Minutes Silence* is a 'lost' film. Not only is retention of its value as an objective basis impossible, most of the films which would provide the frame of reference for its judgment are lost as well.

Short films have survived in even smaller percentages than the features. The last three of

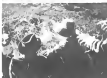
many Australian film studios were converted, advertisements, documentaries and variety shows. In the 1920s and '30s, the Victorian exhibition queue specified a minimum of 2000 ft (22 mins) of British and Australian film per program. A newprint and a short could fill this requirement. Features were — at least in those days — more speculative.

Australian shorts had occurred practically no study before the recently-released *The Documentary Film in Australia*, edited by Ross Lacey and Peter Bullock. Brian Cooper and Andrew Price's excellent Australian topic, *Australian Film 1900-1977*, might therefore be more appropriately titled *Australian Feature Film 1900-1977* to emphasize this historical omission.

Probably the largest body of undocumented Australian shorts are those made by Frank Thring, Samson's Eftée Film Studios in Melbourne. Nearly all of them were shot between March 1901 and April 1894. In those 38 months, 12 features, about 30 shorts and 2 uncompleted features were produced with Eftée's facilities. It was the most active period of sound film production in Melbourne's history.

Assuredly, nearly all of the Eftée output survives at the Natscop Film Archive, Canberra. Many of these films are freely available for loan on 16mm viewing prints, without copyright restrictions. The remainder are mostly held on nitrate prints and negatives. These await copyright clearance.

In its entirety, the Eftée collection provides a comprehensive view of almost the whole output of one early Australian studio. This is probably a unique situation.



Left: F. W. Thring, head of Eftée Film Studios. Above: *The Chatter* from 1911, produced by Eftée and directed by E. A. Searns. Derrick and George Robinson.



The first Thring production of *Building Marbles* (1901), which was made in the Eftée Studio.

Efftee films contrast sharply with those of Cinequest. Lacking Ken Hall's tight direction and William Stephenson's skillful editing, Efftee films are often static, stumpy and characterless, seldom moving outdoors.

But the Efftee films have extremely high value as record. Overriding their lack of cinematic quality, a high technical and artistic quality allows most of the films — and particularly the uncorrupted shorts — to 'speak well' with a modern audience.

The Efftee Entertainment shorts, for instance, are a home-grown equivalent of Hollywood's *Variety* or *Varieties*. Cinequest never attempted to film stage acts on anything like the production scale, with the single exception of the 48-minute *Cinequest Varieties* (1994), of which only fragments survive.

The acts filmed by Efftee were often recorded contemporaneously by Vestron, the only Melbourne record company then active. Dens were made by Pat Hanna, Jack O'Hagan, Keith Diamond, Alvin Tarr, The Soundovers and Harry Jacobs' Orchestra. Efftee films provided a convenient means for cinema patrons to see Australian music and recording stars who had previously been known only for their voices. The bold particularly true in country areas, where cinema patrons had little opportunity to attend good legitimate theatre and variety shows. The Efftee Entertainment shorts are the visual equivalent of 38 rpm records, and run to similar lengths (15 mins). Their recorded sound makes them a priceless and unique record of Australian theatre history.

Unlike the *Cinequest* films, which could rely on their dramatic excellence to draw a crowd, the Efftee films relied heavily on the raw appeal of established radio and stage personalities. Pat Hanna's films are particularly difficult for a modern audience to access, stripped of the cushion of Hanna's subsequent career on stage and radio in the early 1980s. "Digging" humor, so familiar to Australian thespians in the 1930s, tends to be lost on a modern audience. Colleagues, then friends, have since been replaced by the onerous words of another war, and have faded even further in the subsequent flood-tide of language wars with post-war acquisition.

Efftee films all reflect a rather naive and diagnostic Australia in the wars, anxious for psychological escape from the rigors of economic deprivation. George Wallace's "Assue battles" comedies, Dorothy Brewster's depictions of a better life in Clara Gribbins and Pat Hanna's seducing of wartime conscripts all reflect this.

Even in the Efftee documentaries, the occupant element is evident, presenting a "chocolate box" vision of Australian life

Melbourne Today (1931) provides flowing images of rich parks and gardens, busy prosperous thoroughfares and stately public buildings. Arthur Higgins' magnificent cinematography maintains the highest standards of photographic perfectionism. Only occasionally is one brought down to earth by the sight of "vamos" scratching for gold in the gutters of Ballarat, or by a brief shot of a Fascist march in Dear Old London.

Noel Maclean's 11 shorts were made under the Australian Educational Film banner, in partnership with F. W. Thring. Maclean (1898-1989) pioneered Australian macrocinematography in these shorts. Most of the equipment used to make them was extemporized by Maclean. Even today, they are a fascinating and highly original record of Australia's natural history, obviously made with sensitivity and enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, the 16mm viewing prints of the Efftee material are all too often a sad travesty of the 35mm originals.

Without exception, the original 35mm Efftee prints have impeccable image quality and crispness, and unusually good sound quality. In shocking contrast, the 16mm prints of the Ragget Theatre Orchestra show has a virtually unbearable soundtrack, full of hiss and flutter. The 16mm print of the Alvin Tarr short is incorrectly exposed, out of focus, and its sound is terribly distorted.

Nearly all of the pre-1994 sound films were shot on a square frame, or pre-Academy format. In practically every case, 16mm prints from these pre-Academy films are badly cropped at top and bottom, destroying composition and slicing off heads and feet. Copying of these should be repeated to "modified sheet format" reduction specifications, to preserve the original aspect ratio on them. Making 16mm release prints, and even original sound and picture negatives of the Efftee films, are held by the NFA, so the job should not cost any technical difficulty. Fortunately, the Efftee material hasn't deteriorated except for a little shrinkage.

Of the five Great Barrier Reef shorts, only *Ocean Oddities* has been copied complete with its soundtrack. Originally, the NFA acquired only the picture negatives of these four shorts. With the acquisition of several Maclean release prints in the Davidson collection, it should now be possible to recover the missing sound.

Several of the Efftee shorts, including the important Apollo-Gianferis geriatric strike, have not been copied at all. The NFA has at least one print of this, as well as the original sound and picture negatives.

Most intriguing, the 3000 ft film can containing the original negatives are mostly listed in NFA catalogues by the title on the leader of

each film in several cases, during a search through some of these lists in 1970, I found two and sometimes three unlisted items joined end-to-end in such can. Most of the "rag-em" had been previously annotated by NFA staff. It is quite possible that a thorough investigation of the cans of Efftee shorts could reveal a wealth of film material hitherto undiscovered. Until a thorough documentation of Australian film is undertaken, including newsreels, documentaries and shorts, any analysis of the history of Australian film will be incomplete and misleading. The research must begin with the films themselves.

THE Efftee FILMOGRAPHY

Running times of original Australian prints are given. Those derived from cinequest records. In some cases, the National Library's prints are derived from truncated versions intended for release in Britain. These will be noted. Detailed credits for the features, kindly submitted to Cinequest and Film Australia Film 1990-1977, have been meticulously provided.

Several of the Efftee shorts are held only on original negative stock in the NFA.

The technical crew on all films listed here is as follows, unless otherwise stated.

Cameramen: Arthur Higgins, Bert Nicholson
Sound: Alan Hall, Alan Stuart, Jack Murray (PCA Photographers Association)
Sets: W. A. Coleman

Feature Films Made in the Efftee Studio

(Chronological order)

A Co-responsible Course

34 mins (reel B11121) P.C. Efftee. Dir: E. A. Davidson
Cinemat: Marcel Hain, script: John Garry, Patrice Wexler, Gordon Wells.

Diggers

38 mins (reel B11121) P.C. Efftee. Dir: F. W. Thring
Wallace completely directs Pat Hanna.

The Haunted Barn

33 mins (reel B11121) P.C. Efftee. Dir: E. A. Davidson



Clara Gribbins and Robert Chisholm in Efftee's *Callie's Day* (1934). (Photograph courtesy the South Australian Performing Arts Museum.)



(Clockwise from top left) *Big Cuts* and *Big Ragget Theatre Orchestra in Selection from The Great Rag* (1931). (Photograph courtesy Alan Jones.)



The sound department at Efftee Studios, St. Marks, St. Kilda, in 1934. Alan Hall left, Jack Murray, John Garry (Photograph courtesy Alan Jones.)

Donk and Dragan Stokich. Mystery-drama with comic elements. Stars Keith Carradine, Phil Smith, John Cramer, Thelma Scott

The Sentimental Bitch

92 mins, nr 1949/50 P.C. Effex Co. F. W. Thing. Teller adaptation of C. J. Dennis poem, starring Cliff Scott and Ray Fisher. R.R. The RFA has the 35mm release 29/5. Out to 27 mins.

His Royal Highness

86 mins, nr 1941/50 P.C. Effex Co. F. W. Thing. Lash's musical comedy of an American duke and his claims that he is the king of a small European state. Stars George Wallace, John Coburn, Marjorie Green. N.B. the RFA has the British print, not its own.

Harmory Row

83 mins, nr 1932/33 P.C. Effex Co. F. W. Thing. George Wallace in an incomplete but lovable portrait of H.R. The RFA print is out in 87 mins.

Diggers is Brightly

10 mins, nr 1943/53 P.C. Pat Home Productions (3). Pat Home and Raymond Longford. Maritime comedy starring Pat Home. A sequel to *Diggers*.

Waiting Mattie

17 mins, nr 1919/20 P.C. Pat Home Productions (3). Pat Home and Raymond Longford. Comedy of married couples in Melbourne.

A Ticket in Time

81 mins, nr 1910/11 P.C. Effex Co. F. W. Thing. George Wallace portraying comedy.

Sheepskins

Unfinished feature in production at end of 1939 P.C. Effex (2). F. W. Thing. About a sheep of this film was completed before production was suspended by Thing going to disputation with the Fyfe brothers. Some 8000 feet of outtake footage and several punch scenes had been filmed prior to suspension. *Sheepskins* was an adaptation of W. H. Hatfield's book of the same name, dealing with an Englishman's arrival in outback Australia for leading players were Campbell Copple, Marjorie Green, George Wallace and Henry Reynolds. About six minutes of material survive, with lip-synch added.

Streets Of London

21 mins, nr production early 1938, never publicly released in Australia. P.C. Effex Co. F. W. Thing. Filmed 1928. German poetry recitations. Stars Franz Harary, Phyllis Baker, Gertrude Copple, Neil Boyd.

Cara Gittings

88 mins, nr 1910/11 P.C. Effex Co. F. W. Thing and F. Harvey. Story in feature starring Gussie Blanton.

Colli's Inn

Unfinished feature, 1934/35 P.C. Effex Co. F. W. Thing. This Australian musical screenplay, set in the 1820s, was produced on stage by Thing at the end of 1932. A film was planned, but only sound tests were made before production was suspended. A musical score was at Gussie Blanton and Robert Cameron singing "Boy Made The Stars Are Dancing" with a spoken interlude by F. W. Harvey. Survives.

Heritage

98 mins, nr 1945/50 P.C. Expeditionary Film Co. Charles Choulet. Classical 1945 attempt at an Australian equivalent of *The Birth of a Nation*. Stars Fredo Siquerra and Frankie Bennett. City Haller scores and the soundtrack were done at the Effex studio.



*Effex's uncompleted feature, *Diogenes* (1934). (Photo: 20th century Fox)*

The "Effex Entertainers" Variety Shorts

chronological order

- (1) *Bill Cade and his Ragged Theatre Orchestra in *Sadness From The Desert* (5 mins, 1922)* *Rehearsal's Ragged Theatre Orchestra plays "The Red Song" and "One Alone"*
- (2) *Art Hegan — Vocalist Composer (7 mins, 1923)* *Rehearsal's Hegan sings a number of his own compositions including "Lary Song", "By The Sea Side", "The Song Of The Army". After "The Overt" and "The Road To Goodnight"*
- (3) *Carl Parker. *Stand This in Rehearsal From Their Rehearsal* (5 mins, 1923)* *Two of vocalists and piano playing a selection of ballads and light classical songs*
- (4) *Arnel Tier As *Rehearsal* (7 mins, 1923)* *Rehearsal's troupe and other stage comedians*
- (5) *Kath Desmond in *Rehearsal* (No. 1) (5 mins, 1923)* *Learned notes the song, the scene in typical turn-of-the-century decorative style*
- (6) *Kath Desmond in *Rehearsal* (No. 2) (5 mins, 1923)* *Rehearsal's troupe at the RFA in a picture negative, and may not have been released*
- (7) *George Wallace, *Aspirin's Premier Comedian* (7 mins, 1923)* *An excellent comedy short delivered in stinging fashion. Peter, dinner and song. The comedian of the short released. Thing is the Wallace as a star comic for his late Rehearsal*
- (8) *Waddy and Turpin (No. 1) (7 mins, 1923)* *Waddy and Turpin learn a couple of songs of stinging lyrics and solo dancer Dorothy Hutchinson*
- (9) *Stan Ray and George Moon. *Art, Specialty Dancers* (No. 1) (12 mins, 1923)* *Two dancers with Art Chapman's dance orchestra playing "Thank God It's A Monday" Sunday Time*
- (10) *Stan Ray and George Moon. *Art, Specialty Dancers* (No. 2) (14 mins, 1923)* *Rehearsal's troupe in a blackface. Accompanied probably by Art Chapman's dance orchestra*
- (11) *Williamson's Chinese Orchestra in *Solentine* (3 mins, 1923)* *Chinese orchestra with a live instrument*
- (12) *Wanda Lane in *Impressions of Famous Artists* (No. 1) (3 mins, 1923)* *Vocalist stage piano solo singing "We Crowned In The Old Apple Tree". Piano accompaniment by Stan Ray*
- (13) *Wanda Lane in *Impressions of Famous Artists* (No. 2) (3 mins, 1923)* *Impressions of Gracie Faxon singing "A Couple Of Ducks" and Maurice Chaudier singing "Valentine"*
- (14) *Wanda Lane in *Impressions of Famous Artists* (No. 3) (3 mins, 1923)* *Impressions of Randolph Salmon singing "Over The Garden Wall" and of Maurice Chaudier singing "You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me"*
- (15) *The Sunbeams — Harmony Quartette (No. 1) (4 mins, 1923)* *Popular vocal quartette from radio. Solo with piano accompaniment. Carl Fieger. George Wallace in Apple Melody Time" and "Haven't You Ever Seen A Lady" (100 mins)*

(16) *The Sunbeams — Harmony Quartette (No. 2) (4 mins, 1923)* *Songs include "The Wedding Of The Three Blind Mice" and "Sassy Town Express"*

(17) *Lois Venable — *Chorus of Songs* (No. 1) (4 mins, 1923)* *Lois Venable (1881-1971) vocalist, pianist, singer and creator of the radio character "O. Malt", sang "That's My Little O. Malt"*

(18) *Kathleen Givell — *Songs At The Piano* (No. 1) (4 mins, 1923)* *A character actress, pianist and artist. Givell and her sister a musical couple of some repute. Was Givell's personality during these years? It is a great puzzle. The thing here is that her art has become like the stage. "When We Wander"*

(19) *Kathleen Givell — *Songs At The Piano* (No. 2) (4 mins, 1923)* *Songs. Like Mr. Bagg's Orchestra*

(20) *Kathleen Givell — *Songs At The Piano* (No. 3) (4 mins, 1923)* *Songs. Like Mr. Bagg's Orchestra*

(21) *Peter Bonnell, *Celebrated Melodist* (4 mins, 1923)* *Bonnell plays a selection of classical songs, with Jane playing piano accompaniment*

(22) *George Wills. *Justified Song* (1923)* *Short of veteran double flow apparently first listed in an issue of *Freemans*, March 1922*

(23) *Wanda Lane. *Rehearsal in Comedienne* (No. 1) (4 mins, 1923)* *Rehearsal's troupe had star Wanda Lane in her first solo scene. Her career started in the 1910s, and she was known outside as her last as 1917. In 1890 she appeared in the original cast of *Aspirin*. She stayed in Australia for some years in the early 1920s, singing, acting, dancing. Later returned to Britain and then appeared in cinema roles in New Britain film. Here she delivers the narrative "And the first" with accompaniment from Harry Jacobus Paton Theatre Orchestra.*

(24) *Miss Ada Reave — *Comedienne* (No. 2) (4 mins, 1923)* *Rehearsal's troupe in a comedy sketch with accompaniment by Harry Jacobus Paton Theatre Orchestra*

(25) *Miss Ada Reave, *Comedienne* (No. 3) (4 mins, 1923)* *Rehearsal's troupe in a comedy sketch with accompaniment by Harry Jacobus Paton Theatre Orchestra*

(26) *Wanda Lane. *Rehearsal in Comedienne* (No. 2) (4 mins, 1923)* *Rehearsal's troupe in a comedy sketch with accompaniment by Harry Jacobus Paton Theatre Orchestra*

(27) *Karl McQuay. *Scottish Comedian* (7 mins, 1923)* *Comedian, born in 1823, singing with him. "The Devil's Life For Me" with some other comedy parts*

(28) *Williamson's Imperial Grand Opera Co. *Diogenes* — *Overturn From Caravan*, by Reed (12 mins, 1923)* *Conducted by Wanda Lane Almond*

(29) *Williamson's Imperial Grand Opera Co. *Diogenes* — *Overturn From Caravan* (4 mins, 1923)* *Conducted by Wanda Lane Almond*

(30) *Williamson's Imperial Grand Opera Co. *Diogenes* — *Overturn From Caravan* (4 mins, 1923)* *Conducted by Wanda Lane Almond*

(31) *Williamson's Imperial Grand Opera Co. *Diogenes* — *Overturn From Caravan* (4 mins, 1923)* *Conducted by Wanda Lane Almond*



*Gussie Blanton and Harold B. Wade in *Diogenes* (1934)*

Continued on p. 362

*Scene from *Diogenes* of Harry Watson in *Diogenes* (1934) (Photo: 20th century Fox)*

LILIANA CAVANI

LILIANA CAVANI



Liliana Cavani, like compatriot Lina Wertmüller, is a controversial director. Not only have her films run into censorship problems (particularly *The Night Porter*), they also have the distinction of being attacked by Left and Right, and ridiculed for being pro- and anti-feminist.

Cavani's filmmaking style is as original as her opinions, which show no concession to popular thinking and indicate an individualist of striking talent.

Cavani was interviewed in Rome by Sue Adler during the post-production of her latest film, *Oltre la porta* (*Beyond the Door*), which stars Eleanora Giorgi and Marcello Mastroianni.

After graduating with a degree in Classics at the University of Bologna, you attended the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome. What was it like there in the early 1960s?

It worked very well. Some courses were properly designed and others were not, as in every school that the students became very stoned in the years around 1966 and they closed the school down. It was very painful to see the destructive demography because it seems that young people in sophomore years were degraded of a school. It was the only one for cinema which existed, and it was wanted badly.

In most American universities there is a cinema section, but not a Japanese one. There are courses in the performing arts, but, like most things Japanese, these courses are very theoretical and not at all practical.

They are now re-establishing the school, 14 years after it was destroyed, and hopefully they will do it well.

Do you think you would have gone into the cinema without attending the Castro Symposium?

In Italy, schooling is virtually worthless, unless you want to make a career in the public service or as a functionary. No one has ever asked me about my degree.

I applied for a post as a secretary at the RAI (the Italian equivalent of the BBC) and got the job, but then I refused it. Instead, I proposed certain projects for them on a freelance basis. One was *The Story of the Third Reich*, which used German newspaper documentation from all over the world.

From there, I went on to do other things for the K&J and the private television in Italy. I prepared documentaries on ideas that interested me and about things that were not very well known. I did a story about Sallustiana, and another about urbanization. I was very interested in social and political issues at that time, and worked on many programs of this nature until 1965.

Francesco d'Assisi

Finch of Aimee was suggested by the people at the RAI. They wanted to do it in the studios with telecameras. I said, "No, I want to do it on film with people from the street, not professional actors from the theatre." I was able to do this because I already had a relationship with the RAI and had done various things for them.

because we were dealing with Saint Francis. I chose a modern young man who didn't fit in with their idea of the young Saint. They were rather taken aback. But their image didn't matter to me at all. I was concerned about the problem of Figeas, which is that of every young person of 30 years of age who wants to change the world. It was also my problem and that of my generation.

Gallies

Gallies grew out of a co-production between a private network and the RAI and SoHo (Budapest) — the first, and perhaps the last, co-production between Italy and the entire country. Many of the scenarios were done in theatres and studios in SoHo. The RAI didn't want to show it because it considered the film too anti-clerical and anti-Catholic. So it was shown in cinemas.

There were a lot of problems because in doing *Galileo* I had to depict Galileo against the church and the church against Galileo. Remember that only three years ago they took his books off the black list. But I find the polemics within the church and the church itself boring. I don't want to discuss it on film.

I cannibals!

The *Canalside* was something I did in the 1968 period. It was the topic of the time and for me there was a desire to modify and show all to rediscover the true value of things — a search for the meaning of existence. The *Canalside* was a version, shall we say, of *Anytown*, set in a contemporary ambience — at least, that was its point of departure.

Today, our problems have been reduced to two: terrorism and the Mafia. The Mafia is exclusively an Italian problem, but terrorism is a general one. I have never treated these issues on film because the newspapers are full of them and there is no point retelling it on the cinema, unless you have certain revelations to make.

L'ospite (The Guest, the Host)

The Guest, the Host is a film I wanted to make because I had visited so many times, and it had made a great impression on me. I went for a week to observe and make notes. I wanted to do a story about a woman who lived there for many years.

In those days, the asylums were full of people who were not necessarily saving mad, but who were a bit glibly used as an excuse for the family. So they were put away and left there. Often they could not adapt to life, perhaps because they were too sensitive.

The *Guest, the Host* was the story of a woman who had been dumped in an ashtray and who was sick only because the ashtray had made her that way, before she was put there she was not sick, just too sensitive. Instead of sheltering these people, the ashtray becomes a reason or a rationalization cause.

Now they have closed down a lot of these institutions and people who formerly were locked away are roaming the streets. Reforms are needed. It is not enough to open the gates.

Milarepa

Milarepa was inspired by my reading the book of the great Tibetan poet, Milarepa, which I liked very much. In the film I tell the story of a young person who reads the book and identifies with it. He and his professor are the key characters, and the youth has an important character.

Sometimes reading a book does this to you: it is like experiencing physically the thing itself, as being taken on a voyage. I simply wanted to select the feeling of having an experience with a different culture and culture as an imaginary journey.

I made it for television on a low budget but nowadays it is impossible to approach the private networks with projects like this. They should do films like *Mikroyasa*, which deal with serious themes and arguments. But the private networks clearly are not interested in such films; they cost more than they make. So I did it with the RAI.

Gallies, *The Guest*, the Host and *Mikasa* were filmed on 35mm film and done on two reels. I believe in the quality of film stock over everything else. It is obvious that with 35mm the results are superior. I cannot hear when people use 16mm and blow it up to 35mm — the latest film by the Tavenner brothers, for example. It is a wonder, it is not noise.

It is fair enough to say that we cannot compete technically with the American cinema, but there has to be a minimum of professionalism and technical modernization. You can't just rely on the moral content; you also have to produce something that is well made, that is visually beautiful.

The technical aspect is extremely important to me, but the Indian cinema has lagged behind in that area. For those who want their films to be very good technically, like Bernardo Bertolucci and me, you have to go through death struggles to ensure that things are done properly. Advanced techniques cost a lot of money, you have to have extensive equipment.



Tip to Father: Miss (Deb) Engleby
Queso Queso (New York) / *Just Laid* (Charlotte)
Remington (Baltimore) / *It's the Way*
Offense (New York) / *Love, Love, Love*
Green / *The Right Place*



In Italy, the censors don't help at all. The more "poor" a film is, the more they go for it; it is ludicrous. I believe films should be as well made as possible.

Il portiere di notte (*The Night Porter*)

The *Night Porter* emerged when I did *The Story of the Third March*. I interviewed women who had survived the concentration camps, and others who had lived through that era.

There was one woman who said that every year she goes to Dachau, where she had been a prisoner, for her holidays. This made a strong impression on me. I would prefer to go on holidays to Hawaii, certainly not Dachau. But she experienced very intense moments there. She didn't want to tell me about them — though she did say she was searching for something, perhaps the suffering. I don't know. The Italian probe is very complicated.

There was another woman, from Milan, who, when she returned home after surviving a camp, was greatly impressed that people treated her like a poor witch. It got in the stage where she couldn't stand her friends and relatives.

The only thing of which she accused the Nazis was that they had made her perceive the depth of human nature. We always think of this as a positive thing, because we look for the human side. However, the assumption that human nature can be, and that understanding made it practically impossible for her to remain in the company of others. She said, "The physical suffering passed; this won't ever go away."

A story slowly evolved from all this, a story of the things that really happened. War does not just occur, it changes people. It plays on the need of people to feel important, to feel that they are stronger and superior to the next. In the end, it plays on the most sexual instincts.

When I dealt with the sadomasochism within the couple in *The Night Porter*, only the psychoanalyst, not the critics, credited me with being right. They mention that in such couple's relationships there is sadomasochism, which can be developed to a maximum on orders at a museum. The ordinary viewer understood this because he found something in it which, to an extent, he knew.

But the critics are used to seeing, and love to see, things with which they are familiar. And, if it is a woman who has made the film, and she has presented things in a manner to which they are not



accustomed, they get very angry, and rant and rave. They are very uncomfortable.

For example, if you make a film about the war, you have to talk about the Resistance. I have made two films which talk about war, *The Night Porter* and *The Skin*, which treat it in a manner contrary to what they expect. I would not expect giving a history lesson along the lines of what they would expect to hear in the schools, the way these books — the critics — like to do things where I want to say something. I want to do so in a different way — to the sound of another drum. By doing things this way, you come to understand them better yourself.

I grew up in the post-war era. Looking at what people said then, you would ask yourself: well, who was a Fascist in Italy? Nobody! There was not one Fascist left, yet nobody had gone anywhere! It was as if the Moritans had come and then gone away again in their speedboats, back into the sky. You ask yourself: how is this possible?

In fact, you were not allowed to talk about the things the Nazis or Fascists had done; everybody was to agree — from the Christian Democrats to the Communists. All of them had ruled a big rock over it. And then you come to discover certain things, such as many Italians — in fact, nearly all Italians — had actually liked Fascism. You start to see things as they really were then, not as they had been told to you. My generation doesn't know what really happened.

I did *The Story of the Third March* exactly to demonstrate this, to show that Mussolini played on something inside us, on the conscience (pardon, the person who lies below us or across the road). Maybe this person feels frustrated in some way. So the monster let us get on a black uniform and punch somebody, he feels better. He feels like a big man.

Fascism opened the doors for all those who had the problem. To make a career in the university, for example, you had to be a carrying-carrying Fascist. Every university professor in Italy thought it had taken the Fascist oath, just as had all the magistrates. So, what was the poor, little anti-Fascist to do?

The reality was that very few anti-Fascists existed. But, in 1944, when Germany was losing the war,



Top: Lucia Popp emerged through the prison in *The Night Porter*. The *Night Porter* (left) Ugo D'Orsi, Lucia Popp, Dominique Sanda and Robert Fosse. Below: a scene from *The Night Porter*.

suddenly there was a mass of them. But the world has always been this way; the important thing is to understand what happened, otherwise we will never know what we are made from.

Did things become easier for you after the success of "The Night Porter"?¹²

Indubitably, The film was very successful.

Al di là del bene e del male (Beyond Good and Evil)

What was the particular interest in Nietzsche?

From Nietzsche is very passionately all modern challenging and questioning thought. Moreover, for instance, derives from Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's relationship with Lou is fascinating to read. Lou was the blonde creature of which he had spoken, free and independent. She no longer had that 1800 type of female behaviour, most that a feminist, she was already simply herself. He praises her and then he suffers.

Your heroines are similar: Lucia (Charlotte Rampling) in "The Night Porter" and Lou (Gisela May) in "Beyond Good and Evil" are slim, self-worshipping

Above all, they are cool and self-sufficient, as if they were young men. This is my ideal of woman; I am not interested in relating a story about the doll-like heroine. I don't find those women physically attractive, either.

Actually, the Italian censor censored me because Charles Rumpalo was an top making love. It was the first film — in Italy, at any rate — with 'her' on top and with 'her' shaving 'him'; it was 'she' who undressed his pants and groined. But does the woman have to work until it is done in her

In the U.S., this question may not arise, but it does in Italy: How has being a woman influenced your career?

I really don't think that things are any better for women in the U.S. than they are in Italy. On the contrary, due to a strange cultural contradiction, in the Latin countries women are more oppressed than in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Same in Italy when a woman walks down the street, men turn and look at her. They whistle, too, but I don't see what's so bad about that. They may not pinch your bum in the U.S., but there is a greater hatred of women among the men. They all seem to be

homosexuals in the band, even if they go on to marry. It isn't like that in Italy.

In *IRBY*, it is often the woman who doesn't cut off and take an action job. If the dril, she wapsid) encounter any more difficulties than those encountered by American women. Actually, when you look around, you see there are female prime ministers in India and England, and there has been an Israeli woman Head of State, but even in the U.S. The Americans all talk a lot but they never actually do anything. They are a bunch of boys.

So, I don't believe that Italian women have a more difficult life — especially in the north, where I come from. My town is full of hard-working women, and they get more respect than the men.

Having said that, one must remember that in the south of Italy men are capable of killing a woman if she has a lover. But you have to understand the context. It is part of a game. I am not saying that you should kill — on the contrary — but it is important to see the thing as a whole.

Gennine Greer went to Sicily in a very provocative way and was negative preoccupied, in order to speak critically of it. But once she got there, she understood a lot of things, much of which was contrary to what she had critically thought.

Everybody tends to stay at their own experience. One can say, "I find it irritating that a man places me on the bus", and of course that is perfectly right. It is an awful, masculine, reactionary habit. But it has to be seen with an overview.

La pelle (The Skin)

In *The Skin* I wanted to talk about that period of the American occupation of Naples. I think that everything we know about that era is distorted.

Malagaris [justice of La pelle], like everybody else, was a Fascist and then became a Communist. But in many things he is much better than many others.



But apart from the phenomenon that is Naples, it suggested me greatly to prevent Fascism to the rest of the city.

I also wanted to show that it is always the women and the children who pay things back together again. But then, even more than now, their opinions never counted.

Malaparte's point of view is excellent: the population, which is never asked if it wants the war or not, is always the one which pays. Yet, there are lots of other stories I could have done, but it was important to me to point history as it really happened, not as it is depicted in the mythology. This is the more affectional.

In fact, I should now do *The Nile 2*, because of what went on in Naples after the earthquake, and with the money the government provided for its reconstruction. Tobias really went wild: the Gomorrah (Napoleonic Mafia) was involved and it was practically like a war breaking out. Last year alone, there were 187 deaths from this "civil war," much more than under the American occupation in Naples. So why should we be scandalized over what happened there, when India it is worse?

Do you always collaborate on a screenplay?

If I were offered a screenplay which I liked very much, I would do it. But that hasn't happened yet.

So far, I have always done films based on stories written by me or with a collaborator or, as in the case of *The Nika*, based on a story taken from a book, but again with the screenplay written by me.

You have been quoted as saying that the images are more important than the dialogue . . .

It is always better to tell everything you can without words. The value and relevance of the stage is always more important and more interesting, just that cinema is not literature.

Of course, dialogue can be very beautiful, and can be also extremely important. But I believe it is better that a scene has no dialogue at all than that it has too much. Naturally, if you are making a film about a trial then there has to be a lot of dialogue. But the photography, the costumes, etc., are all very important.

In the case of *The Skin*, for example, we had to reconstruct the 1940s — the Americans in Naples and the rubble in the streets — but we could only give an impression.

Continued on p. 179





CREATURES GREAT

AND *Mostly*
A SMALL

BRIAN McFARLANE

PART ONE

THE BIOGRAPHY INDUSTRY

Laid side by side, as I am sure many of their authors would like to be, film star biographies and autobiographies take up several, good-sized shelves in any performing arts bookshop. Twenty years ago, an actor generally had to make it on the stage before he or we could expect his life to be celebrated between hard covers. So, luminaries of Broadway and Shaftesbury Avenue, from Tallulah Bankhead to A. E. Matthews, were trying to persuade us that they were as interesting off-stage as on, and certainly that they were much more interesting than we were. The 1970s changed all that. Not to have the enthralling saga of your life take its place on the shelf with all those other lives has become a tacit admission of not having made it. Mere decent reticence in the face of a dull life stops no one, nor does even merer unimportance.

For the flood of star biographies and, worse, those written allegedly by the stars' own hands, has gathered momentum through the past decade and shows no sign of abatement. Furthermore, they are getting longer (the first fruits of Stewart Granger's *Anecdotes* run to more than 400 pages) and, a still more disquieting sign, there is a new trend towards stopping mid-career. Presumably, this latter habit, as evinced by Granger, James Mason and the unspeakable Shelley Winters', is meant to leave us breathless with anticipation for Volume Two. This is indeed making a little go a long way, since the off-screen lives of these people often are remarkably dull — often as dull as our own, just lived in more comfort.



"They're not stars for no reason, you know . . ."

Film stars are so much a phenomenon of a packaging process, whereby some actors produce recognizable, marketable commodity, ensures that it is handsomely ads wrapped and employs highly-skilled managers to market it, that sometimes it is hard to know what there is to any given star apart from a seductive physical presence. This presence is, of course, infinitely more important on the screen than on the stage, which is at once more exposed to the consumer and more tactfully distanced from him. How film stars look seems to me to be the one inadequately visual element in their screen personas; whatever else they may bring to their roles in the way of, say, intelligence, understanding, depth of feeling or experience is much harder to assess and to stylize.

This being so, it is perhaps not surprising that on the page, as distinct from the screen, their offices are disappointing. The perceptiveness and sensitivity we have admired as they loomed above us in the dark must, we begin to feel, belong elsewhere — perhaps to William Wyler,

shrewdly selecting the best of 50 takes, or Gregg Toland catching the optimum face in a way that softens the hard angles.

On the horns of the nearly 20 volumes with which I have fixated every six months a recent month, I would find a hard to adduce evidence for Gregory Peck's assertion that, "They're not stars for no reason, you know. They're stars because they are interesting people."⁴ One of the chief recurring elements of these works is curiosity apiece. Clearly, even if not noticed to the point of being offered any role in a film takes a degree of persistent allied curiosity has previously explicitly held an actor's position.

Having achieved not merely any role but the power and right to choose those roles — that is, to be a star — it is equally clear that as intense egoism, and egoism, enters into play to sustain that privileged position. Even a professional megastar like Peck deserves gratitude from the fact that, in his first film, his "role was to go above the title — and it has never gone anywhere else since" (p. 57). A mistress like Bette Davis snarled and clawed her way to the roles that made her a star, and, once established, the shrewd savvy by "intensely demanding, imposing, seeking steadily for what was left" best for the film of course too, but increasingly best for Bette.

To know you are a film star is, presumably, to know that millions of people around the world want to watch you both being recklessly "yourself" and doing something that is called film acting: it is a heady thought no doubt, and so the head, no doubt, it often goes.

More often than not, unassisted by facilities, education, religion — any other of the delectable trappings of their society, they are encouraged by those with a financial interest in their careers to believe their own publicity, to believe themselves the centre of their personal universes. With so many lives dependent on whether their latest film is pulling in the customers, small wonder it is that many of them give no-worries, apathy and others but of daily wishes are not fulfilled. To be as universal as soon as a film star is makes perceptive demands on the sanity, balance and humanity of the often otherwise unremarkable human being just beneath the glamorous surface.

"Night of the few large stars"

It may be that the publishing business of the 1970s (not just star lives, of course, but every aspect of cinema) is a product of a more or less useless age. Now that there are so few authentic stars left, the reading public is perhaps doubly fascinated with the big names of the past, expecting that they must have big lives attached to them. For, whatever it is that makes a star, the public knows where it sees one.⁵ At the moment there aren't many to see that is Wally Whitely's "Night of the few large stars."

I remember reading in the mid-1970s that there were but 30 bankable stars left in Hollywood (Redford, Newman, etc., and one woman — Barbra Streisand). This is a black sly understatement: you think of how many stars glitzed on the mid-70s payroll of any one of

the big studios. Can it be that present degradation has provided both nostalgia and the tape to literary embellishment? As a sign, that is, showed by interested parties such as publishers, public and aging stars themselves.

The reasons for the decline in number of stars are complex. It is not that we, the cinema-going public, now feel less about the idea of stars. It seems to me that the public still reacts on to any actor who is even half way towards Coward's "star quality" — towards the likes of Jane Fonda, Warren Beatty et al., as the acronyms of On Golden Pond suggest, towards unrepentant and undying Hollywood staples such as Katharine Hepburn and Henry Fonda. But the passing of the studio system, that very nursery of the stars, the precariousness of the film actor's life when he must negotiate each new role as part of a business deal, a decreasing willingness of newer actors to share their private lives (even a diluted or ragged version) with their public; an increasingly sophisticated awareness of films among articulate sections of the public which both make a cold of old stars and deny the need for contemporary ones: these are a few pieces I break the reasons for the decline in stars. The mass audience will still turn out for a Star Man but not for a star turn. We are no longer "fused all night by troops of stars" in those rough terms we are lucky if we film has one star supported by ten thousands.

"... Preserve the stars from wrong" (Wordsworth)

Apart from First Ladies' who didn't marry at all and Mac Wren who may or may not have done so, most of the biographed girls and boys here have reached up award parades. "I've been married five times", [Hilary Fonda] said abruptly, "and I'm goddamn satisfied of it."⁶ In most of the other volumes, the casting-off of the old and the taking-on of the new are presented as part of the reader's journey, for truth is human reason. Fonda's abrupt honesty on the matter — and I don't mean to be sinking a moral point about this — is markedly at odds with the usual cast offered about marriage and divorce.

On the whole I prefer Susan Hayward's direct account⁷ of why she wanted to be rid of Joe Barker, "the son of a bitch and son of a bitch" (the first volume of Fredson's account of Gregory and Greta Peck's breakdown).

"... the old-linking terrorisms [of] three French girls only seemed to echo the state of their relationship together. It took very little time for them both to realize that they weren't going to be able to cope and that it had come to an end" (p. 125).

I don't mean to underestimate the cost of passions that stand on, with all its demands for ego maintenance and repair, must make one relationship; nor do I want to suggest that it is easy to write about a succession of husbands, wife and without the benefit of formal comment. Recently notions of romantic encounters are sometimes tarnished by the time the fifth or, in Elizabeth Taylor's case, the seventh marriage is reached.

The latter biographies are caught in something of a bind here: on the one hand, they wish to present their subjects as a moral mirror of Little Nell and Mother Theresa of Calcutta; on the other, they are aware that a breath — or better, a gust — of scandal will

⁴ Steven Cooper, *Stars: Five Down, Grande Publishing, 1976*.

⁵ Janet Minton, *Myself I Found: Howard Chandler* (1981).

⁶ Shirley Wootton, *Shirley — also known as Shirley* (1981).

⁷ Shirley Wootton, *Shirley — also known as Shirley* (1981).

⁴ Michael Freedland, *Gregory Peck*, W. H. Allen, 1980.

⁵ George Thayer, *Stars: A Biography of Stars*, Doubt, New York, 1981, p. 140.

⁶ Janet Minton, *Myself I Found: Howard Chandler* (1981). The incident — admittedly not a cover page photo — knew exactly who was to get a starring role; that is, Susan Fonda and Audrey Hepburn but not Paul Simon of the otherwise fine *Shogun*, like *Shogun*, will do.

⁷ Susan Fonda, *Stars*, Hester, 1981.

⁸ Susan Fonda, *Stars*, Hester, 1981, p. 140.

⁹ Susan Fonda, *Stars*, Hester, 1981, p. 140.

¹⁰ Christopher F. Anderson, *A Star: Greta Garbo*, W. H. Allen, 1981.

boast asks like nothing else. Responses to this dilemma are various: Shelley Waters has decided to let it all hang out and a very revealing spectacle it makes; James Mason has opted for such discretion that a census is a surprise to find him posed as a co-respondent in Roy and Pamela Kellie's divorce or to find, 100 pages later, that he and Pamela are partners.

The point of this is to suggest that very rarely indeed does a star emerge from one of those biographical skirmishes with his or her image unscathed. Hoseney will frequently be asked to throw discretion and make them sound dull, and a star for the situation may lose respect even as sales thrive. It is not just a matter of sexual behaviour, revealing other aspects of the private lives of stars rarely makes one think better of them. Claire Bloom is one exception: she writes with satisfied honesty about the snags, setbacks and setbacks that, she believes, played a part in her career. So, too, is Peter Robinson who emerges, miraculously, from Kenneth Burrow's damning biography as hard-working, intelligent and compassionate.

The fact that the off-screen lives of so many stars seem not to be particularly interesting sometimes leads biographers into whipping up a spurious sense of drama where none exists. For women stars this usually means an affair with Howard Hughes, the man, finally afraid that there is an intimate profession, owed on nearly experience like moon-rising or flying. Again and again, one feels how much more satisfactory these lives would be if they devoted themselves more wholeheartedly to the screen: the male stars famous enough for us to want to read about them, that is, their work in film. Instead of the current stress on their sexual appetites and adventures, instead of white-washing their sexual histories, from which progress they inevitably emerge as lesser people, they could very usefully tell us a great deal that would be worth knowing about the processes of filmmaking.

"It is the stars, the stars above us govern our conditions"

Shakespeare knew it all. For, in the history of Hollywood certainly, the influence of stars in shaping entertainment has been enormous.

Productions were built around the talents of particular stars, the greater the responsibility on a star for a film's success or failure, the more powerful because that star's work in the making of the film. If stars could not sell a bad or unattractive film to the public (cf. Cleave and Parnell, John Andrews and Pearl), they undoubtedly increased the pulling power of many average-to-good films. Considering, too, the public's notorious fickleness it could never, for instance, be reduced to look on Deanna Darr as moving after the Christmas Holiday fiasco, it is not surprising that so much studio effort and air gun were also poured that those stars above us would continue to govern our conditions.

Few actors fought harder to stress and maintain stardom than Bette Davis. In 1964 she told her own story in the close to present it in *The Lonely Life*, as Charles Hingham tells it now in *Bette*, the lady's own account seems to have offered just a carefully polished public



Top: Bette Davis (right) of scenes in *Memento Mori* (left). All stars: Eve Aron, Joseph Schildkraut, Francis Ford, Apple Carter, Norma Sherry and Bernard Cribbins in *W. J.*; Vincent's Martin Anthony; Robert Wood, Joan Henry Fonda and Tim Allen in John Ford's *My Darling Clementine*.



3: Chris Reom, *Limelight* and *After*; *Wonderful World*; *Nedra*, 1952.

person of brist New Englander, desperate crop honesty and commerce sense. Higham codes this image by describing her as self-dramatizing, obsessively ambitious and, "a woman whose brilliance and aggression prevented her from achieving [fulfillment] in a relationship." The one great, positive attribute she persistently reveals is energy, but that is certainly made unattractive by the darkness, optimism and egotism that accompanies it. This energy seems to have worn out the man in her life though there were brief periods of happiness with husbands 2 and 4 (Arthur Farnsworth and Gary Merrill).

It stood her in good stead for her protracted fighting with Warner Bros, with the result that she got more than her fair share of pay roles and the power to dictate to whom Hollywood she would perform and how her public would therefore view her. Her worst on-screen competition for the title would be stiff, even with Joan Crawford and Melvyn Frank (now gone) would not doubt grant her energy and courage. There was danger at the time in assuming roles like *Mildred in The Heiress*, *Beowulf*, or *Lolita* Cochrane in *The Letter*, or *Baby Jane*, as well as the perception to assess their potential to remove her from the public and make the public accept her in them. Higham's account, as starkly professional and unemotional as others from her assembly line (Katz, McIntire, Aron), in brief does justice to the films and makes reasonable sense of the way David's energies worked towards making so many of them memorable. He is quite astute at identifying the highlights — *Jessie*, *New Frontier*, *Alf Alton* live, among others — even if an assessment of them are unflattering. There is rarely more to *New Frontier* than "of course, a complete, a comprehensive of achievement." But Higham and Crawford do better with classic Hollywood in their 1970 book *Hollywood in the 40s*. However, he often has interesting comments on the conditions surrounding the making of the film and, discussing *New Frontier*, he claims: "Times in those days were explicitly tailored for them, and [Cindy] Robinson included many touches which suggested Bette's New England background." These "touches" are then considered in relation to several scenes.

The book is full of many references to David's concerns and obligations as Farnsworth, with his "aura of false self-confidence, masculine severity, strength that disguised a lurking ironic weakness"; at Paul Mann — "withdrawn, taciturn, never a rival"; at John Farrow — "heavily, drabbed leader with a loud mouth"; at George Brent who was "magnificent, tough, and headstrong by a wickedly vicious tongue"; and at that "small, port-fellied and balding" great love, Charles Boyer. In fact, David seems to have liked very few men and fought with most of her male co-stars. Her briefs were younger men like John Farrow and Geraldine Fitzgerald, whose careers she encouraged, and some of her best performances were opposite young actresses like Joan Crawford, Mary Astor and Anne Baxter. In fact, as her star rose, say in 1941, she was less and less likely to have a leading man who could draw her full fire — either on-screen or off.

Probably a terrible woman, David is undoubtedly a great star. She frequently took unimpressive scripts, saw something playable in them, grabbed them by the scruff of the neck, belted them and everyone concerned into shape, and as a result she has survived as a star for 50 years. Despite ill-health, neo-neuroses, hide-alike or respect for men of her colleagues, the constant to sustained public respect and attention. Knowing about the woman, as Higham's biographical approach

without saints we meet, adds nothing to the star image. On the other hand, though, the private did not diminish the power with which that image has often worked on us, in the case of, variously, Mildred, Regina Coddin or Margie Channing.

Wade Bette Davis was riding the wave as Warner (known affectionately as Fox Quartz), TYRONE POWER was keeping Twentieth Century-Fox solvent and David F. Zerkoff rich. *Howe Aron's* "Greatest-on-screen boyfriend", *The Secret Life of Tyrone Power*, despite its salacious packaging which drew attention to Power's sexual indiscretions, is in fact a surprisingly balanced account of the man and a sometimes shrewd appraisal of the career. If Power's sexual life caused him a good deal of torment, his star career was surely satisfying in the way that he wanted. Coming from several generations of acting Powers, he always seemed to be after a measure with which that — that is, as a sexual star on stage and screen.

Power retained quickly a potent romantic image in his post World War II films, from his *Knights of London*, *Seven and the Old Chicago* opposite Jeanette MacDonald, *Madeline*, *Carroll*, *Lovely Young* and *Alvin Karp*. More than usually susceptible in his dealings with studio chiefs, he was used by Fox to help launch supporting stars like Joan Evans, Linda Darnell and Anne Baxter who all profited by exposure in films with Power. He, however, longed for more demanding roles and, as *Aron* points out, found real critical success only once in his 25-year career. That was in Edmund Gossling's authentically naïve indie film *Howe Aron*, in which he played a shabby opportunist who well indeed. His earlier, more prestigious film for Gossling, *The Razor's Edge*, had sought to stifle his range. "His long speech", *Aron* writes, "about eventual redemption had to be delivered with a certain sense of inspiration, since the camera held him mercilessly in its close-up gaze." But for all his efforts in the role, and for all the film's selective praise, Power came to fear it was "pretentious, diaplectic claptrap".

There is something touching in the story of this agreeable sounding man whose private life was beset by depression, nervousness and whose public life hardly ever satisfied him, even when it was satisfying millions of cinema-goers. Tyrone Power has more won and 26 or so years after he finally looks on-screen, from *Nightmare Alley*, he probably won't be in the twilight of his career (as he is now) but in his best high minded pieces (as he is now) of *Unlabeled* in *Agatha Christie's The Alibi*. *Howe Aron* neither wishes to spin as the most successful number of Power's life nor does he follow in them.

"And the stars are shining bright" (Shelley)

Shelley, answering who knows what urge towards the setting up of idols, are essentially a phenomenon of 1930s and '40s Hollywood. Brando and Monroe had their hour but those that chose longer and brightest began their blaze in those decades now sentimentally known as the Golden Years. It is hard to believe anyone is modestly inclined in Tyrone Power's career started in the mid-'20s and ending on his star status till the end of the

century. But, with the backing of a shrewd and grateful studio who pushed him — not that he needed — through 35 films in seven years (1936-42), he became a household name in a way that is scarcely possible now that the studios are gone, and households, perhaps, not what they were.

Power died in 1958, just at the stage when the newness of a star career was getting tougher as the studio crumbled under threats from television, anti-trust legislation, and possibly a more sophisticated public awareness. But if the studios carefully nurtured their valuable star properties, the latter often seemed to have little sense of creative direction when they left — or were turned loose by — the studios. "Which condensed not only the publicity but which puts the constraints would play."¹²

HENRY FONDA, who had his first success as roughly the same time as Power, with whom he co-starred in *Jezebel* (1938), remained his star status until he died a quarter of a century after Power's, clashing in with his 1960s Oscar for *The Golden Rule*. It is hard to believe Power could have retained his position that long had he lived. It is not just that Fonda was a "better" actor — i.e., more complex, more conscious, more eloquent — than Power ever was, and he established this on the stage too, as well as *Howard*. Technicians records it, and as the biography bears out, he was never fully held in the stardom of a long-term contract with any one studio, and he seemed to relish the right to appear on stage.

Technician's sense of the theatre, made to create the plays — *My Kismet*, particularly, *The Green*, *My Kismet*, *My Kismet*, *My Kismet* — while keeping on the film, but he makes clear that Fonda understood the difference between the two media. He quotes Fonda:

"I just pulled it [i.e., voice] right back to reality because that was and that microphone was about all the projection you need. No sense in using too much voice, and you don't need any more expression on your face than you'd use in everyday life."¹³

And Technician adds:

"In almost a hundred films the technique Fonda employs has not varied. Some say his acting style, some say his manner, was even acting. Quiet, calm, even to anger or defiance, whether comedy or drama. Fonda was as little forced publicly as possible. Whatever he does he makes you see inside the character he plays." (p. 88.)

Very early on "Fonda left early into the clutches of film-making," Technician says. It is largely in terms of his manner, which seems to be "two-dimensional" (though he is used to the exposure of raw stock to fit his advantage" (p. 140).

Considering how much more perceptive Technician is about acting than most of the stars' biographers, it is disappointing that he does not give more detail about Fonda's film career. Fonda's career began with *Jezebel* and the casting of Young Mr. Lincoln and *The Grapes of Wrath* mark about his peak together, while *My Darling Clementine*, a time-saving masterpiece, gets no more than a passing mention. Other notable films like *The Wrong Man* and *Fort Apache* are dismissed over, while *The Best Man* is not there at all, there is a little more on Sidney Lumet's *Angry Men*, which Fonda also produces. "I don't think if you took a look and look him in

11. *Howe Aron: The Secret Life of Tyrone Power*, Boston Books, 1986.

12. *Shelley: Was 1940, The Movie Stars: The Viking Press, 1970, page 90.*

could do anything else, he's incapable. As a performer, as a man, he's pure." Slightly later, dazed, and if it sounds an extravagant claim it is perhaps not far from the public's view of Fonda. He has always seemed like one's ideal of the American Ideal, according to Tachikawa, there it came that a little correspondence between the screen persona and the real man, though the latter emerges as more sincere, more human, more realistic, harder to know and harder still to live with. There is honesty in his approach to some of life's major issues, and in some of his past relationships a striking integrity emerges, not unbecoming Tom Ford, Wyatt Earp and Barney Greenwald.

If Heavy Foods made a career out of pretending to be what he isn't, whether in a lousy gay room or bringing order to the wild West, that other wild West — Mae — appeared on screen to take nothing seriously — especially not sex or race, and especially not any of the virtues held dear by middle America. Forget Caden's one volume in heavy change from his never-mind-the-gaps (1917-1918) to his (1919) approach may not mean to cut MAE WEST down to size, but it does. "She had spent most of the twentieth century inventing herself", Caden wrote, and if she did not invent sex, "She... saw the beauty in it and probably no one before or since has had more fun on what she called the 'sexes battlefield'" (Caden suggested).

And yet, if Caden is to be trusted, the real-life truth is a good deal less amusing and less glibly than her brief, dazzling star career might have suggested. In fact, Mae West is a somewhat sad story of a woman who pursued publicity on public, first on stage and then on screen, and perhaps never knew anything about us, let alone love or private life. The off-screen facts are shrouded in mystery, training with gaps of birth (1893 or 1897) — not that it can have mattered to anyone in one bit (a century), including the message (or was it) to Frank Wallace in 1931, whether or not, if it happened, it was over commitment, and indeed none of her private life.

West's 1930s films are now camp classics, a status that has nothing to do with their quality, which, apart from the choice one issues, is generally atrocious. However, in the '30s the one-liners came thick and fast, many of them Mae's own invention as we are told, and she quickly secured a powerful position at Paramount. Her first screen line, in reply to the hard-boiled girl's "Goodness, what beautiful diamonds!" was the immortal, "Goodness had nothing to do with it... diamonds!" From that moment, Caden tells us somewhat fulsomely, "she walked slowly, majestically up the stairs into movie palace history" (p. 90). The next year, *She Done Her Wrong* and *I'm No Angel*, both with the young Cary Grant, established her as a major star.

If none of the remaining six films she did in the '30s was as good as these, they were good enough to keep her public and Paramount movie close by. The 1940s came with *W. C. Fields in My Little Chickadee* was one a happy occasion ("They were, in turn, responses of each other, hostile, then indifferent", says Caden) and the show in the resulting film. Their comic styles — few words from her, many from his — proved comically contrasting.

It was, however, a triumph of publicity, and not taste, compared with the last two films of her career. Mike Sarag's *Mrs. Braddock* (1970), a Hollywood sex farce from below the horizon of the burlesque, and Ken Hughes' *Baron*



Top left: Mae West and Dorothy Lamour in John Ford's *Down to Earth*. Left: publicity still for John Ford's *My Side of the Road*. "If you had smaller than me, you wouldn't look like a happy either?"

Ben-Hur (1970), in which she plays the bride of a young English aristocrat. But it is absurd to talk of Mae or Hughes as if they were the authors of those films which defined our nation. Mae West was merely the holder of her own film, in the way of the frothy, funny, easily forgotten drama of her life. There was probably much less, in several senses, than met the eye. The best is there in those '30s gaps ("Between two evils, I always pick the one I never tried before") and Caden does well to quote a good number of them. For the rest, he is left with an enigma: a star who became the target of a frenzied purity campaign, a woman whose private life would almost certainly have contradicted the public image.

Another star who scarcely seemed to be taking sex seriously was DOROTHY LAMOUR. By the end of the '30s, in films like *Jungle Princess*, *Ford's* *The Hurricane* and *Her Jungle Love*, she had made the strong and brutal female, but her most prolific period of stardom was in the next decade when she made 29 films. In these she established herself not merely as a star but as a blessed with a richly defined sense of humor that worked so best often in the sex-based films (1939-52). Her career and her out-of-control-on-the-private-life are now presented for inspection in a volume of artist's outlandishness entitled *My Side of the Road*, "as told to Dick McClean" (p. 1).

One doesn't doubt that Dorothy Lamour was a cheerful, pleasant woman but there just isn't 200 pages in her life. It is absurd as if she is aware of this, to see the film consistently to whig up a spurious narrative interest. "Being practical, my first thought [laughter is not her major thought] was how could I get to Hollywood on my limited funds. Why bother?" I asked myself, I knew I could never make it in films anyway. (Actually, this points to one of the weaknesses of all these books: we know they all made it, so that response is at a premium. This being so, most of them need more interest — or better-observed — lives to offset the daunting lack of narrative interest.) Dorothy — it would seem unfriendly to call her

Continued on p. 580



14 Dorothy Lamour (as told to Dick McClean), *My Side of the Road*, Scribner Books, 1981.

COLIN HIGGINS



Colin Higgins is one of America's most successful practitioners of screen comedy. His screenplay for Harold and Maude (directed by Hal Ashby) was the basis of a continuously-popular cult film. Subsequently he wrote Silver Streak (directed by Arthur Hiller) and wrote and directed Foul Play, 9 to 5 and The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas. While serving as a jury member at the 1982 Montreal Film Festival, Higgins talked to fellow jury member David Stratton.

Apparently you grew up in Sydney

... .

Yes. Actually, I was born in New California in 1941. My mother was from Sydney and my father from San Francisco. They had met while she was a passenger on the "Marpesa"; my father was Chief Purser. It was a shipboard romance.

After Pearl Harbor, my father enlisted and my mother returned to Sydney with me and my older brother. In 1945, we lived in San Francisco for a while but soon afterwards returned to Sydney, where I stayed until 1957. We had a house in Hunters Hill and I went to school at Enmore.

I got my first part-time job in Sydney, working for NIMM at their

old Chislehurst St. office. I had to take the trains that advertised coming attractions to all the city and suburban Metro-cinemas every week.

How did you become interested in writing?

At first I wanted to be an actor. In fact, I lost a scholarship to Stanford University because I became so obsessed with theatre. I went to New York and hung around the August Studios, but there were no acting jobs. So I became a page at the AISC television studios. Then I lost hope and volunteered for the Army. I was sent to Germany, and became a reporter on the army newspaper, *Spear and Stages*. I was discharged in 1965 and spent

six months in Europe, mostly in Paris.

Then I went back to the U.S., back to Stanford, and eventually got my B.A. majoring in Creative Writing. While at college, I supported myself as an actor, playing in small theatre productions. I also spent a year and a half in a dreadful one-furor called *Over Night*.

Then in 1965, I visited Expo'67 in Montreal, and went to many of the programs at the Montreal Film Festival. That was when I decided I wanted to do it. I was accepted into Film School at UCLA, where one of my fellow students was Paul Schrader. At the same time George Lucas and Randall Kossuth were at USC. That generation has become the backbone of our industry now,

the first group to bridge the gap between film school students and the industry proper.

What sort of films did you make at UCLA?

I made two: *Open Day* was a satire on student films. *Rebel* was an anti-war statement. Then I submitted as my thesis a feature screenplay, which was *Harold and Maude*. I hadn't much money and I had answered an ad in the *L.A. Times*. A couple wanted a part-time chauffeur and someone to clean out their swimming pool in return for food lodging in the chauffeur's quarters.

I was very lucky. It was a pretty swank Bel Air home, and turned out to be owned by a film pro-

ducer, Ed Lewis (Edward Lewis produced several of John Frankenheimer's films of the 1960s, including *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Seven Days in May* and *Grand Prix*) [Ed was kind enough to take me quite often on sets, I showed him my script and he liked it].

What was the inspiration for "Harold and Maude"?

It came from seeing a dolly crane for rental in a film equipment store. I thought I would make an exercise for film school, something very elaborate technically. So I worked out a situation with the dolly crane in mind, and that became the first scene where the mother discovers Harold's home.

Then I thought, this is a bit pretentious, why not make a joke of it? So it became a fake suicide. And that is how the whole idea came to me, it all springs from a desire to use that piece of equipment. Much later I realized that it developed into a personal story, with Harold and Maude representing the extreme-external sides of my own character.

Anyway, Ed Lewis showed my script to Bob Evans at Paramount, who liked a lot. But I wanted to direct it myself. Now, in that post-*Easy Rider* period a lot of new-comers had been given the chance to direct, but they had mostly

failed. So Evans, though he wanted the script, was not at all keen for me to direct. However, he gave me, or rather Paramount gave me, \$7000 to do a director's test.

Ed, who was making a film at Columbia at the time, arranged for me to use the *Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice* set to do the test. It was amazingly economical, David Lipp shot it for me and we did three scenes from the film, all with the kid and his mother.

Well, the result was that they liked it, but not enough. So eventually I relocated about directing it myself and Hal Ashby was brought in; I was made co-producer. I got on very well with Hal, and we both thought the film went out great. Paramount was back on it, too. Then, five weeks a head. It was the end of 1971 and *The Godfather* was supposed to be the studio's big Christmas release, it was booked into all the biggest and best theaters. But Francis Coppola hadn't finished it. So *Harold and Maude* became a last-minute replacement. One little film of ours in those big theaters up against all the top releases of the season. We were worried. It was a major failure, total disaster. And, of course, we *performed* our parts.

But it became a success eventually...

Much later in the meantime, I was in trouble. I finally got an offer from a couple of friends, Tom Miller and Eddie Mikas, who ran a television film company. They had sold a "Movie of the Week" to ABC on the strength of a tale, *The Devil's Daughter*. But they had no script. So I wrote one for them, Jeanne Swartz directed it and Shirley Warren and Joseph Cortes starred in it. It was just a job.

Then out of the blue I received a letter from Paris, from Jean-Louis Bresson. He told me *Harold and Maude* was a success there, that he had loved it and had thought of turning it into a play for the various French actors Madsen Remou. Would I help? I was very pleased and flattered. I went to Paris, adapted the screenplay into a theatre piece and then worked with Jean-Claude Carrière on the French translation. It was a huge success and ran for seven years. While in Paris, I met Pierre Bruck and he asked me to join his company as "playwright-in-residence". We did a play together called *The Di*, a surreal piece about alienation people in Uganda, which was put on first in Paris and then at the Round House in London.

Below, left: scenes from Carol and Ted & Alice during the shooting of Harold and Maude. Right: our first scene. Harold and Maude written by Colin Higgins and directed by Hal Ashby.

How did you get back into movies?

Well, by now Harold and Maude was looking better, it had become something of a cult film ignorantly. I still wanted to direct films, and I had figured the way to do that was to find producers who would support me. So I contacted Tom and Eddie with an idea for a script, which was *Silver Streak*, in the hope that if, by some amazing coincidence, we could make a success with that one, I would have a chance to direct the next one. And that is what happened. We offered *Silver Streak* to Paramount, but they turned it down.



because Tom and Eddie were television people. So we took it to Fox, and Frank Yablans agreed to do it with Arthur Hiller directing.

Later we offered *Feel the Heat* to Fox, and they said, "We don't see this time directors", so we went back to Paramount, which approved it because of the success of *Silver Streak*.

Were you happy with the job Archie Hilder did on "Silver Streak"?

Archie is a very sweet man. He is not Hal Ashby, but he is a good western director. Seeing the film now, I think the climax, the train crash, is terrific, but I find the early scenes kind of slow. He



reads the script with a great deal of respect. If I had directed it, I would have been a bit less faithful to the writer, I would have slashed away.

Having been an actor yourself must have made working with them easier when you directed "Bad Play" ...

Yes. Goldie Hawn is a joy to work with, very natural and totally understanding of the comedy way I like to work, which is to have a situation go homey and real, and then let it play out. I wrote the script for Goldie, but it was a fight to get her; the studio didn't want her very much.

I re-wrote the lead for Chevy Chase; it was his first movie, and his style was very different — a television style of establishing a rapport with the audience on the other side of the television camera. Of course, you don't do that in movies; you let the camera come in and document you. At that time he had no real respect for the craft of screen, but he did a very good job.

Dudley Moore, of course, was terrific, too. I like actors and I like to assist them getting performances.

What visual style did you go for?

I wanted a snip, laugh, well-lit film with sharp edges and with San Francisco looking marvelous.

Director Celia Wylla (Celia Wylla) with Julie Fowlie and Jackieline Fowlie tell their directorial story. Director Celia Wylla with Julie Fowlie and Jackieline Fowlie. Right: Jackieline Fowlie with Julie Fowlie. Left: Jackieline Fowlie with Julie Fowlie.

What attracts you to comedy?

I have great satisfaction in hearing people laugh. People ask me what part of the process I like most: writing, directing or production. For me the best part is when the piece is finished and you sit in the theatre and hear the audience laugh.

I am also personally optimistic, I like to see the absurdities in everyday existence. Comedy comes very naturally to me.

Do you find writing easy?

I would not say "easy." It is getting easier because I am more experienced and more conscious of what the processes are. Writers have to create an imaginary world; live in it, and at the same time report on it. It is a very whole-person state.

In the early days, I found it very frustrating when I couldn't get into that creative state, or whatever it is, which enables you to create, now when that state doesn't come, I just consider it part of the process and don't get too disturbed. I used to beat myself up. Now I think

that to write anything is a kind of miracle.

How did you come to do "9 to 5"?

I was approached by Jane Fonda, who had seen *Real Play*. I had heard about this project for about a year. The premise was that three secretaries wanted to kill their boss; Jane was the producer and had got Lily Tomlin and Gail Patrick. I think originally Mike Nichols was to have been the director, I knew it was then a project for Herbert Ross.

Essentially, no one could lick the script, and the whole thing seemed to be falling apart. I was flustered to be asked, but when I read the script I realized why it was in trouble. The concept was right, but I knew it would have to be completely re-structured.

Shortly after I started working on it, I went to Cleveland to a meeting of six representatives of office writers. I asked, as a discussion point, if any of them had ever thought of killing their boss. Suddenly everyone started laughing; they came up with some of the most grotesque scenarios which they had conceived in moments of secret stress. And I knew then that was the key on which to hang it all: to get the women in such a stressful situation that they would imagine killing their boss in grotesquely humorous ways.

They are three very different kinds of screen ...

Yes indeed. Jane is very determined, but also surprisingly girlish and fun-loving. I thought she was super.

I had never seen Dudley work before and hardly knew who she was, but I went to see her not and was amazed by the warm, quick-witted ad-libbing she did in the audience. When I discovered the following night that all those ad-libs were scripted, I was very impressed. Any time an actor fools me, I am impressed. I knew she would have no problem as an actress. I wrote the part as much as I could for her.

Lily's background is unconventional, so there was yet another contrast. I also wrote with her in mind.

Your next project was "The Bad Little Women in Town" ...

It was another troubled situation. Universal had bought the rights to the stage musical and originally the stage director was going to do the film version, but he was fired — as was the writer. I was then brought in and production was put back about nine months. Universal had already cast Earl Reynolds and Gail Patrick, so-called insurance and backup, so





it was well advanced and the delays were expensive.

I re-wrote the script from scratch. Originally, the problem was that the Broadway show was about a sheriff who was 60 years old and a maiden about 15, who had a relationship about 20 years before, a one-night stand in Galveston. It was clear to me the relationship had to change once those two actors were cast and that the romance had to be ongoing during the trouble over the whodunnit.

Considering how expensive it is to do a musical, which means you have to aim for the widest possible audience, the film is surprisingly snappy, and only in its reality but in, for example, the scene where Patrice presents Reynolds with some flirty pictures . . .

I think it should be snappier, in the sense of sex being fun. In some parts of the U.S., newspapers wouldn't even print ads using the word "whorehouse!" But if you are writing a film with "whorehouse" in the title, you can't be too coy about it all.

Many American critics have remarked on the show-stoppers solo by Charles Durning as the Governor of Texas . . .

I cast Charles. He is a very accomplished actor, but he had started out as a dancer years ago.

We worked for three solid months on this dance. It did not come out to him. In fact, the first time I saw him try it I thought we were going to be in trouble. But he worked and created.

I am very proud of that sequence. We did it on location in Austin; it is set in 1931. And there is no precise photography involved in the moments when he appears and disappears behind the columns. We did that in the way that Busby Berkeley did some of his great scenes, by ensuring that the director and collaborating team perfectly. Fortunately, we were rushed out the day before we shot it, so we had a whole day in which to rehearse in the Capitol itself, and believe me I took all that time to get everyone—camera operator, dolly operator, choreographer and actor—happy.

Do you think there is a problem with the ending of the film?

Well, we did go through various ideas for an ending. In one we had Dally get into her car and then go into his, the Inspector lift up with the camera, and they drive off in opposite directions but finally I figured we needed a happy ending.

I am not entirely satisfied with the ending; maybe it is not that quite right. But I have some enthusiasm applied when he sweeps her off her feet.

I really meant the device of



reporting them soon earlier in the film . . .

Oh, yes, I am criticized for that. But I did it because I like movies that I would not change that. I understood why some people don't like it, but for me it is fun.

I think the conventions of musicals are difficult to take these days, young audiences can get restless when characters have long songs. Maybe we have to find a new convention.

The reason I loved doing *Whorehouse* was that it was an old-fashioned MGM musical with two big stars doing what they do best. It is a slight story about a simple relationship: boy has girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl. It is very unoriginal, unromantic and has been very successful, but if I did another musical I would try to do



Top left: Dally (the film's Neilson) is in love with Dally (the film's Neilson). See her in a scene with Dally (the film's Neilson). Bottom left: Dally (the film's Neilson) is in love with Dally (the film's Neilson). See her in a scene with Dally (the film's Neilson).

it better. It is interesting to speculate what it might have been like if the film had been cast closer to the original stage production, maybe with Robert Midgum and Shirley MacLaine. That would have been interesting.

Now that "*Whorehouse*" is a big success, presumably you can pack and choose your next project . . .

I can, as you say, get finance pretty easy. I would like to do some smaller films, and I would like to do one in Australia, because of my background there and also because I am very impressed by all the excellent writers and actors you have. It would very much like to work with some of them. And I find the Australian accent delightful.

Are your future projects comedies?

Probably. I have a couple of projects that we are considering now, but I think I would always treat them as comedies. I understood Oliver totally when he says he plays every part as comedy. He said once that he always means an ending a laugh is the first ten minutes, whether it is there or not. I approve of that. *

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<i>The Australian Motion Picture Yearbook 1983</i>	p. 2
<i>The Documentary Film in Australia</i>	p. 3
<i>The New Australian Cinema</i>	p. 4
<i>Australian TV: The First 25 Years</i>	p. 4
<i>Film Expo Seminar Report</i>	p. 4
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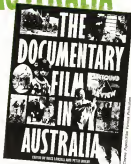
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The symposium was a remarkable success. Tape recordings made of the proceedings have been transcribed and edited by Cinema Papers and published as the *Film Expo Seminar Report*.

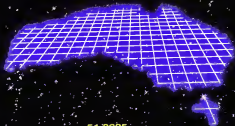
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- Production-Distribution Relationship
- Distribution Outside the United States
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PICTURE PREVIEW



THE YEAR OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY

Guy Hamilton (Mel Gibson), an Australian Broadcasting Service journalist, arrives in Jakarta during a time of political upheaval. There he is befriended by an enigmatic Australian Asian, Billy Kwan (Pip Torrens), and they profoundly influence each other's destiny.

Guy becomes increasingly involved with the politics of the country and with Jill Bryant (Sigourney Weaver), an English Embassy secretary. Eventually, as these interests diverge, Guy must choose between them.

The Year of Living Dangerously is directed by Peter Weir, from a screenplay by David Williamson based on the novel by Christopher Koch and an additional scenario by Alan Sharpe, for producer Janet Mylchreest. Shot on location in The Philippines and Australia, the film is Weir's 10th feature and his second collaboration with Williamson.



Cast also from left: American journalist Pete Curtis (Michael Murphy) and Chinese-Australian cameraman Ruby Kwan (Phyllis Kwei); Australian journalist Guy Hamilton (Mel Gibson); left: Tiger Lily Wall (Linda Kozoi), and Kwan (Pip Torrens) during the political events in Jakarta in 1968. The movie takes concept, the production design by the film — Kwan, Hamilton, Ruby Kwan, Peter Weir, Curtis and Kozoi (from Southville) as Indonesian women in green money by Kwan, Kozoi and Hamilton.







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CLASS OF 1984



Peter Malone

Class of 1984 is the kind of film that immediately draws protests from those who fear films are going too far in dramatizing social unrest and in visualizing violence. It is true that the film's Lincoln High is a dingily-depressed school, that its central gang is sometimes a variation on Alex and his Clockwork Droogs, and that some of the final killings, especially the circular-saw slashings, are alarmingly gruesome. But a case can be made for **Class of 1984**.

The film presents Perry King as Mr. Norris, the expert American teacher with his potentially devoted students. There's signal symbolism, it also presents a punk gang that suggests student uprisings are not too far away.

As *Class of 1984* proceeds, the pace is shown to be fast and more psychotic, while the pace, violence and brutality, the audience is forced to stomach more and more with the teacher and his growing frustration and rage. When the gang tapes and abducts his wife, one gets so much resolution and disgust that there is little problem in joining the teacher emotionally in massacring the gang. Our heads may not approve, our emotions may be disgusted but the film makes the gut content to what we see.

By the time the gang is dead and the bloodied teacher roars his wife, I, for one, felt physically better for having experienced the horrendous moment. I had no intention of massacring anyone, but there had been a real catharsis.

"Utterly", "explosive" and "sensational" are all apt words to describe the film. Yet, the invitation to identify with frustration, anger and rage, and their eruption is compelling. Further-



The punk gang attacks a black student. Mark L. Lester's *Class of 1984*

more, the passing of this rage by visual violence is very strong.

Mark L. Lester's films have usually had a drive-in release in Australia. Distributors have seen that as tough audiences that will please the drive-in audiences like any other exploit. The film then disappeared, although *Tracktop Women* has had some Melbourne University screenings and *Snake*, his most respectable



Fingers suggest what lies in the *Class of 1984*

Snake, has been shown on television. In a *Monthly Film Bulletin* review of *Tracktop Women*, Terry Rugeley wrote:

"*Tracktop Women* carries its way jovially through a gross deal of 0-00000 territory, unending the conspiracy girl goes exploring with strong recommendation of 'Flicks Writers and small gangster movies, so this its appeal is at once nostalgic and very up-to-

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NEW PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES

Fred Harden

SOUND MIXING

Julian Ellingworth discusses the new Atlab mixing theatre.

The Australian film and commercial industries have been fortunate to have had a tradition of invention and a supply of creative technicians and audio-engineers which have compensated for the lack of the latest equipment. But with the opening of another stereo sound film mixing facility in Sydney, Australia is now being serviced by audio post-production of a quality that will allow it to present its material at a standard equal to any in the world.

The continuing improvement in the quality of theatre sound equipment, with the installation of stereo sound and Dolby noise reduction systems, has created demand by local and overseas markets that must be met. The improved sound systems are also increasing the range of amenities that a producer and director can call upon, and this in turn places demands on the operators.

Julian Ellingworth is the chief mixer at Atlab and it was at the opening of its new mixing theatre that Ian Wilson was able to interview him and follow this double theme of craft and technology. Ellingworth begins by discussing his entry into the film industry.

I left school in 1961 and did six months of general apprenticeship before getting a job at Australian Film Services in the accounts department under Keith Williams. But a day later being bored I found myself spending most of the time in the sound department and in the end the accounts department where I have been ever since.

I became fairly interested in production and I finally managed to arrange Bob Lacey into getting me into it. He could use I was wasting everybody's time in accounts.

The first job I had was as a director's assistant to Alan Emslie on *The Adventures*. It was about these young children one of whom was played by the 12 year old Peter Hollander.

After that I went into the editing room with Paul Buckley and learnt how to synchronise trailers and take and picture and that. Then came time of technical work and I was the first boy doing technical experiments.

I then worked for Len King who had a Regis. In a while Regis would let him go and say they needed a sound mixer so one day I said "This is a Regis and mixer would be". So I went to Regis and in the meantime I went along with Lloyd Chivers on camera for an episode of *Murdoch*. I forgot which episode it was but it was being made by Charles. The sound staff have been at it for months they ended up in being back to work on it again.

Eventually I joined the staff and went on location in New Guinea and all around Australia.

However I got heavily sick of standing around or sitting on camera cases waiting for the lights to be set up so for people to make up their minds about which way the eye line should be I became so bored I decided I would by studio work and do the



"...two plus two computer"; at work in the new Atlab mixing theatre

mixing, at least I was involved pushing wires up and down while others sat around.

I was at Film Australia for a total of 18 years. I left shortly after my long service leave. So I guess I was making for about eight years.

During my leave I worked for United Sound. Although I intended going overseas on a study tour I only got as far as Port St. They were getting busy with *Benny McKinnon Meets the Gun* and the second *Alvin Purple*.

I was a great experience working with Phil Perren. He was doing things differently in Film Australia. It was just like being up and recent now. When I went to

United they were recording *Hollywood-style* on the three-track. It was new money and it was exciting. You were able to do things that you would get frustrated trying to do when recording ten films.

Then I got boozed out and working on *Luke's Kingdom*. I was doing effects for three months and I got the credit again. So I went back to Film Australia and worked there for another year while they were setting up the new mixing theatre. I mixed with my knowledge of United Sound. I changed the mixing console.

The console was made by Neve, which was a failure, and is generally only with my idea of how it should be. I was out of the console for 12 months. I figured I was an expert.

I was designed about 15 or so years ago and now it's actually out of date for stereo films. Though it has been doing their code successfully. They have done *Star Wars*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Dead Heat*, *The Plastic Man* and all other films.

After that I went to Australia. I intended to go to the US. At the same time I became interested in stereo mixing and applied for a Commonwealth Film Commission. It was for a week's change overseas. Much to my surprise because I had never seen it before. I was told "But I want it as an all money just enough for an around the world tour and about 150 a day."

I was away for six weeks and watched some stereo mixing at Hollywood and London. I picked up an enormous amount of information and a lot of tricks about how the rest of the world operates.

Did they welcome you?

Yes. I was not allowed into a couple of films because the directors were a bit set. But through Ron Farrow contacts in Hollywood I was able to see more of the films. I saw them on the *Muppet Movie* which I had thought had been done in about two quarters of the time. I watched Bill Ramsey who was the Academy for *Wonders of the Deep Sea*.



Julian Ellingworth, during a sound mix

and Special Quads who was mixing *Ready to Rumble* in Atlanta's studio. I was in the Postman was mixing *Northridge*. Dick was convinced and made an Academy for Grammy People.

So I'm a lot of top people, I was listening to compare what they did and what they had to put up with, what was on.

What were the differences?

Some of the studios, which will remain nameless, tended to have two or three guys a fling behind the panel and it was boring when seeing they just tended to "ghost" around for a few minutes. They would take out until a little bit of the session walked in and then they all had an argument. They would then go away and do things and two hours later the mix would start again. It seemed as if they had just took time off their hands then they needed.

Was there an best-laid intention?

Yes. Certainly there were a lot of guys behind the panel. I switched from one time spending four hours getting one music sequence ready and then was nothing as it there and just when music and a vocal track. They played it. I mean sure it was the right idea, then played it again. Then they called the music editor in who learned to it and said he thought it was right but they should get someone else. So they went and got another man in the music studio and failed it. And said it was a failure.

The number of people who become involved tended to be too big as it got beyond the plan. It would have been better to have owned the real and come on with something like instead of having to be too late.

How do you stop that happening in the future?

Well that is exactly what we don't do here. If there is a definite goal on we would go on to some thing else because we just simply don't have the time to sit. They were looking at a 20-week mix on a film which didn't need that long.

I had done the top and found what I thought was quite a big — a good growing in Dolby Stereo — but I was still not as far as the job. When I really really found down the problem and say, "Yes, I don't do it in the back to bring it to this story." But I did some back thinking. I would be interesting and I did know more about things than I had before.

However, there wasn't a lot of work happening at United Sound when I came back. So I went and spoke in Play City at Aspen. Eventually I got the report order in September 1979. From that point on I was a decision to build a bigger and better studio at Aspen.

It was funny. I guess the decision was to build a bigger and better and bigger then anybody. We knew from Australia we got big going and we figured United Sound would do some thing eventually. It was not a matter of when we did it and how.

We had a few problems building the ideal mix because of space but at one time was told about the mix. The mix was enormous, but I was not able to keep it in the house, which though was not bad. It really is think the whole thing is a step forward.

The project started to take shape in about October 1981. We started to know about two years after I joined.

We had to run into the side gate in the new room for six months, which at least gave people some to work in. Then said the normal operation of people saying a word for the mix. But with a new console in February 1982, we made a decision to buy a Quad Eight Console. The only choice was between a custom-made "New" and a Quad Eight, which was modified to our system. Most other studios

are completely mass made and in any console in this line is the absolutely essential. It can be made if you say that it is not good because this has to be the best. I then a whole box of console has to be built on the side, which is not the way to go.

To my knowledge, there were a very few in custom design console, but neither the fact of exclusive nor the delivery schedule was favorable. We could get a better deal from Quad Eight in Hollywood when most film studios — all the times I saw had custom built Quad Eight.

We came up with a proposal for Quad Eight, which was bought in at the last night and received systems as it is to perform in the way we wanted. It was used in the Quad Eight console and said that easily like a Quad Eight Console, but there were two extra in the Quad Eight.

I started to go to a quality of music made with two four speakers channels and two back speakers. I was used to the 12 in February 1982.

and going to before and equalizers which is all that would have been what it is. I thought, let's just integrate things and get them to evolve some of the modules.

Surely, that is the reason for having a second built desk.

Well the Americans wouldn't entertain the fact of console effects. It was up a smaller studio. Then they all went into the ground and built a huge console. They had 20 inputs on it and they had a mix of 1000 in the system. They had huge outputs and you go to "record" it. It was 2. Our console does look like a main position most people. You can still enjoy to say it 20 outputs.

Do you have three or four people in the perfect?

Three or four usually. But we are looking at how our computer. It could save easily demonstrate how it is the third built up the union.

Then one man could possibly handle any 20 and mix a 20 up as there, say 12. The computer will have playing back until you get the balance right. Then add them to the other 12 and the computer will be the mixer. It will do what it is told without knowing back. It will remember those take movements and will do it in many times as you like.

What about equalization?

It doesn't need to be equalized with one sound through one filter. I can already equalize. On the other hand, I have done. There has not been a huge amount of equalization. I don't usually equalize the dialogue track, just the effects (just the effects mix and then the final mix).

When you have a sample of four a side already pre-mixed for stereo, dialogue and music, you can do them on groups (EQ), run the computer and take the whole thing. It someone wants to change something, saying "That is not but why



The Quad Eight mixing console in the Asha sound theatre

for a week and we reported it so that it had all center and right center sound channels to go home.

They wanted space again to look on a box and say "For a film modification what you want is this." I said:

"But all that period the box is going to make it if you want to change all those buttons to something else, and just an older idea was not just to do that. They eventually agreed and we got everything we wanted in the center of the box.

The only thing we have on an end on are people, when they are the last on can be unplugged and given to somebody else taking out the front. There is a pad on the front board.

What I was worried about was that they would choose the console by visually

There are consoles, in my opinion, who people's acceptance has not been large in Hollywood. A lot of people are there when I make one side than most of 20 years in some studio, and would say after the fact of 1970s, looks and sound, and happy with. This is just not their game. They have been into sound and I really don't see why they should have to, or how they would be able to accept it. I am finding difficulty and I am not 27.

Do you have to program the computer yourself or is it adding software?

The software is supplied on floppy disc and the computer itself has been RAM installed. You put the software on it and the processor is permanent.

One way of using it is to put down tracks

don't you bring this in, either, you can update the bit of information. The whole thing comes on the disc and you can then go straight into record.

In effect, it is replacing your memory, leaving you in a mix, writing and reading, making things.

And allowing you to automate as many things as you would like. Other than saying "Let it go for a take." This way I can playback just the first mix and last nearly the time it takes to go, because we had rehearsal for an hour to get it right.

In Melbourne, where there is no decent studio set up, the sound is mixed, mixed at one place and mixed at another. What do you think about it?

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Discographies	Stage credits	Performers	2004	Quintet	Discographies	Stage credits	John Stanger
Albums or EPs	1978: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
Live albums	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
Compilations	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
Single discs	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
EPs	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
Albums or EPs	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
Live albums	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
Compilations	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
Single discs	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>
EPs	1980: <i>Black and White</i>	Michael McKean and The Screamers	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>	1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>			1991: <i>Rebel Rider</i>

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parent company	5. Procter & Gamble
location	Indianapolis, Indiana
major products	Shampoo, Soap, Deodorant
competitors	Unilever, P&G, L'Oréal
marketing agency	McCann-Erickson
website	www.pampers.com
advertising budget	\$100 million
advertising strategy	Brand extension, New product development
advertising results	Increased market share, Improved brand image

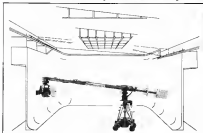


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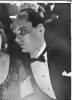
Julian Rosenberg

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Pilm Reviews



Lonely Hearts

Krith Connelly

Paul Cox's *Lonely Hearts* is a real composition of suitable virtues, and the Australian film industry majority who voted it Best Film of 1982 do not doubt appreciated this fact.

A sad tale couched amply with moments of anarchic poetry, *Lonely Hearts* is short-plot in conception, thoughtfully executed, and places its somewhat implausible comic tension as a magnificently counterpointed edge.

Through the character's not assimilable Australianisms, the more sympathetic Douglas as Cedar Rapala, Iowa, will have little difficulty in relating to them as their problems.

Although the film has actual parallels, not so old as keeping with its otherwise wryly ironic tone, they aren't as subversive of the whole as might be imagined. For one thing, their situation works well as comedy. Many moments, they also realize as the film's to top comic tension even from the individuals trapped in mutually-enslaved lifestyles are likely to break out by whatever occasion occurs in their lives. Hence, the male lonely-heart shipwreck and gratitude to be told, while his ladylike counterpart, finally accepts the gift of a lifetime of companionship, accepts the lead role in an amateur production of *My Darling*.

Those individuals are Peter Thompson (Quentin Kopp), a 33-year-old bachelor piano-funer, and Patricia Currow (Wendy Hughes), a shy, awkward, but younger, bank clerk. They meet through a grating introduction service and the film charts the curious course of a half-dead romance. It is a less-than-novel subject, ripe for discomfit, but Cox, maintaining a festivity, humorous premise, struts it with wit and, impetus and seductiveness.

Peter appears to have gone through life doing everything except of idea by his mother (whose funeral opens the film), her, documenting sister (Julia Blyth) and others. There is a sugges-

tion, too, that Peter has been only too ready to follow his wife's behind a slightly nervous to please just about everybody from his aging mother to the local elderly citizens club.

Peter, only child of an overbearing father (Vic Gentile) and hapless mother (Joan Hancock), has recently moved into her own flat — obviously with the disapproval of her parents.

Free for the first time of parental constraint and detachment, Peter and Patricia now take what would seem to be their own experiences regard as the next step: they nervously seek a partner of the opposite sex, not necessarily close, but, initially with something more than casual acquaintance in mind. Life taking isn't easy for either of these shy, reserved, usually long-up people. Their first outings, at Peter's suggestion, include stunts in his mother's grave and his warty limbs night.

The character arc, of course, hyper-

Patricia Currow (Wendy Hughes) and Peter Thompson (Quentin Kopp) in *Lonely Hearts*.

bolic, but there is a little of Peter and Patricia in many Australians of that age-range. It is precisely this ease of probability that makes the sweet/bitter focus of *Lonely Hearts* so telling. The two suffer various misunderstandings, miscommunications and false starts, through which the screenplay by Cox and John Clark plots them with a nice mixture of wit and tragedy.

As well as having to deal with over social and personal hurdles, the pair must deal with the disapproval of their parents and friends in re: marriage. Peter's overbearing and bossy mother and Patricia's loving and overbearing Dad.

Cox and Clark construct a small but effective drama, when Peter is caught, in shuffling, to realize the couple's emotional deadlock. It also places in perspective several additions of behavior, and action, which are



Peter at the police station after having been caught shuffling. *Lonely Hearts*

worker who does not feel much sympathy for the establishment. As a result, their arguments tend to be very emotional. Kalfoudis believes that it is only Nikita's loss of living has job that keeps him from becoming a terrorist. His belief reflects the emotional difficulty Kalfoudis has in controlling his fear of being murdered.

Rozsa does not want to help the police find the troublemakers among his infamously delinquent, person would definitely scotch the possibility of their existence, which is his main concern. Rafferty faces a similar dilemma, when asked by some villagers to send an informant about what to do. If not worried on act of terrorism. In Russia, he uses the case of Gaudy Kozak, a worker from Gdansk, who was murdered because he opposed some interests to the authorities.

"If all Gushki's fellow workers had denounced the killers too, since they all saw them, it would have been impossible for a crowd of witnesses to be assembled."

But Raffaele acknowledges the delicate nature of the situation when there is only one witness to the crime:

Root has always portrayed issues of political relevance in his films, but in *Three Brothers*, the political issues have become secondary. As Root puts it,

¹⁷The film talks first and foremost about love: love for parents, a wife, a little girl, love for nature. For one's own dignity, for the demands one must impose oneself when faced by specific choices.¹⁸

This is why Maria's decision to be grandfather is an emotional scene in the film and is linked directly to the mission of the old man. In one of the conversations, his young wife loses her wedding ring on the beach when covering his feet with sand so they parallel so that of Maria's presence, even when in the water, is in the heart. The same ring, which the young Donato recovers by sifting through the sand and then puts back on to his wife's finger, is seen in the last frame of the film. In this time old Donato puts it on his own finger, near or

It is important that Platonov's *The Third Son* is created as a story of competition since some of the situations in the film come directly from the Russian short story. The competitive bedroom that the brothers share is an example. Another is when Nikol brings his daughter Maria, who also bears her grandfather in his bed, to the family.

Most effective of all is a dialogue between Maria and old Donno. One of the most moving moments of the film is when she bursts into tears and he asks her, "Why are you crying?" The girl answers, still crying, "We are all alive, Grandpa is the only one who is dead." Later, it is the old man who cannot live here. Not even his

It is important to note that *The Mothers* was filmed in 1960, when integration in Italy was still at its peak; the Red Brigades, and other communist right wing groups, were loudly claiming superiority from a few decades' head. In those of Italy's society, were some real units as typical and very dangerous. This finally led a vigorous support against terrorism in the 1970s.

great to the west by the mapping of the Indian population, and the subsequent strong anti-Indianist policy. Airline

1. Inadequate with MCO, Sept 4. Score below 1981-82.

tears, accompanied by a despair and almost silent sobbing, and it is Martha who asks him, "Why are you crying? I've stopped." The embarrassed grandfather dries his tears with a handkerchief saying, "I'm not crying, it's just sweet."

Another fine moment occurs when Minto stays with his grandfather, while his father and uncle carry the coffin in the funeral, and finds an egg on the ground and gives it to the old man. A close-up of the gesture — his old, wrinkled hand holding that symbol of the seed of life — conveys an optimistic feeling for the future, transcending further the common ground of childhood and old age. (ruled by Martin's insistence and DeSoto's simple wisdom of an old man.

The symmetrical dreams of the three brothers are also very effective. Nikola dreams of visiting Maria's mother and overcoming his pride in the face of her affair with another man; he sees himself going to bed with her. Rastko falls asleep while looking at the photographs of the czar over which he is expected to preside and dreams he is gassed down in a train in Rome, and

[illegible]

This sequence is accompanied by the musical comment of Pino Daniele, famously hailed "le re' jazz" ("the king"). A Neapolitan, Daniele is one of Italy's most original rock singer-composers, who sings in Neapolitan dialect. Quoting an Italian proverb, Daniele sings:

"And the state should not condone us, because I'm crazy."¹⁶

He then mentions Masaniello, hero of a popular uprising in 15th Century Naples against the Spanish rule and oppression by the nobles.

The combination of music and imagery reflects distinctly Bono's desires, his Utopia of a clean world: a world without drugs, crime and noise; a world of happiness.

The intimacy of *Three Brothers* is superb, from Pasquino de Santa's beautiful photography — the natural light of the interiors, the sharply defined shadows and the vivid contrasts — to some simple but brilliantly filmed sequences. In one of these Norro is making coffee as the kitchen and hears a sound of sobbing coming from outside the house. He goes towards the kitchen window and, from above, looking downwards from the first floor, sees both his brothers in the

³ «L'acqua viene usata spesso da leoni che
controllano da poco» (l'«I» si riferisce al
leone e Gay-Mia è una zingara di nome
Mia, non il suo cognome).

3 "Adesso lei è pronta"
"Adesso lei è pronta!"

yard. The moment follows: Rosco kneels and reaches up to frame Roscoe's head in the center of the shot. Nicolo, crying and leaning on the wall outside, appears at the upper right of Roscoe's head, whereas Kalfus is seen on the lower left side. Rosco starts crying too and his head, out of focus, moves far enough for the viewer to understand what is going on. This was certainly a difficult shot to do — and masterfully accomplished.

The acting side is superb, particularly Charin Vond's performance as Donato Bore in 1960. Vond earned films as early as 1912, and is best remembered for his portrayal of Jo in *The Wages of Fear* (1953). As Rex has admitted, Vond actually set the pace for the film.

¹⁴ 'We lost us all a sort of serenity. During filming he was like the snakes of that old Turkish tale, like the natural world about him: the rhythm of the film began to adopt the cadence of his movements.'¹⁵

Three Brothers is a very special film and perhaps an example to many great Italian directors who have not managed to produce any recent work that is worth mentioning.

Three Rivers (The Beatles) Directed by
 Francesco Rosi. Producers: Giorgio
 Morini, Antonio Masi. Screenplay:
 Francesco Rosi. Director of photography:
 Pasquale De Santis. Editor: Franco
 Matarrese. Art director: Andrea
 Chiodi. Music: Pino Pizzelli. Sound
 engineer: Mario Rossetti. Cast: Philip
 North (Paul), Charles Van (George),
 Masha Markova (Lucy), Yvonne Hillen
 (John), Andrea Poma (Rudolf),
 Terry Carver (Cleo), Giovanni
 Sardo (Max), Franco Matarrese (Ringo).
 The company (Raffaello's) Travel
 Production company. Also: *Black & White*—
 Giuseppe (Pino) Spadaro. Fresh Cut
 Music (Pino) July 1985.

We of the Never Never

Brian McFarlane

As one of the few Australians alive over the age of 30 who has not read Mrs. Anscombe's autobiographical works, I am able to approach the film version with an open mind. What my open mind revealed was, in the main, a tamponed book. How for this impression relies with Mrs. Anscombe's well-loved books — *My of the River Niger* and *The Little Black Princess* — I cannot of course say.

For the first half hour of this painfully long film (it runs to 128 minutes, even in its cut form), it looked as if its visual surrealism might save it from oblivion. The director, last spotted on a close-up of James, was prepared for her wedding clothes, and this gradually grew into a bizarrely composed out of the wedding to suggest the intimate face going on inside her. This is sure to be a vast, empty

brown landscape, vermillionly pre-
sented in a fast forward-moving shot,
as the camera homes in on and then
passes a figure on horseback, before
pulling up for an overhead view of

4. Interview with Noel, Nigel & Stuart
Wynn 1981.10

shows—after a commitment to the story which in the early part of the film seems exciting. There is a quick shifting out of landscape (tree trunks, foliage, evocative strange and chosen movements), of (shouting) houses' borders and of (subliminal) filmic images. The film's narrative activity is sustained by Gary Hansen's English and photography, accompanying the Ganes' wedding and their journey to the Northern Territory trade station, where Hansen is to take up the position of manager. As a result, there is a postmodernist dramatic effect in the film's narrative, which is not so much about the Ganes how arrived at the station, neither they nor the film have anywhere left to go. The viewer is completely aware of the uselessness at the heart of the narrative, so that what we see is actually a visual correction of the film's narrative.

Under the first narrative impulse exhausts itself in pining the Golem to the woman, Peter Schreier's strenuousness dissipates its energy in a series of rubrics, starchy waxes, which fails utterly to build to any sort of cumulative power of steamship. The *Concerto* and *Adagio*'s direction work devotedly to preserve every date, to leave no probability untraced.

[illegible]

In other words, the narrative seeks for the utterly predictable in human small and large in the way it can to craft its least imaginative expectations and in the way it shapes — to use the term loosely — the major narrative motif. In the best, it turns the revelation of one-level human's pluck in the constant the rules of outback life. The banality are there in the ramshackle screaming word, despite its silver seductive surface, in Austin's directorial landscape.

Not one whitened, not one narrated element, whether it be the relationship between Jamaica and America, or the treatment of racial issues implicit in the text, means any dramatic insight to the reader. The text is so much better more than that two people are often on the screen together. As Jamaica, Angela Purnell McGonigal (perhaps the most conspicuous name in the book) is a woman who is virtually invisible to the role except that she is a mother. To mother poets, like those of *Colloids* in *The Changel of Jamaica* (Harcourt) and *Red Hunter* is engaged with in *Scandalous* (the through in *Scandalous* is a woman who is a mother, but here she is a mother at all). If the role of Mrs. G. is to mean anything, it must suggest a mother's love and a mother's love that are not

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Phar Lap is directed by Simon Wincer, for producer John Seaton, from a screenplay by David Williamson.



Clockwise from top: Tommy Woodcock (Tom Burlinson) rides Phar Lap during a winning racing run (filmed at a Melbourne race, early morning preparation at Newmarket); Harry Telford (Nathan Phillips) and Tommy at lunch; Harry Telford (Nathan Phillips) and Tommy at lunch; Harry Telford (Nathan Phillips) and Tommy at lunch.



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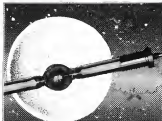


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The Biography Industry

Continued from p. 532

Lumour — is bent on adhering to the master: "If you can't say something new about a person..." She has some trouble second-guessing Joan Collins to this principle when Collins puts the lead in *The Road to Hong Kong* (1961), not elsewhere she is uniformly generous to her colleagues. She insists that life on the *Road* sets was overwhelmingly wholesome and joyful, and that Red and Bing were excitedly engaged in games that kept everyone in stitches.

Derisively Lumour's was not a major career but it provided a good deal of innocent pleasure. To give her — or Mr. Maloney! — her due, she does seem to remember who did what in her films. She has either a good memory or his been careful in checking the credits for the films, so that the book is not burdened with those unnecessary errors that afflict so many of the more. She is generally mistaken in talking about the films, even if this omission on a grossly simple level. Her private life, once over her early marriage to Herbert Kaye, was a model of happy domesticity with William Howard, "the most beautiful man [she] had ever seen, in or out of movies' picture." From Howard Hughes the merely married comes, nice girl that she was, she turned down his dinner invitations.

A nice girl? is probably not the phrase that leaps to mind in relation to SUSAN HAYWARD but, as Christopher P. Andersen tells her story published by one small press in the same year as Dorothy Lumour's, she lived her life, if not unadmirably, at least consistently from the poverty-stricken Brooklyn girlhood onward (such more real hardship than Lumour can master by way of drama), she was a real fighter — tough, determined, businesslike, loving spirited but modestly, genuinely courageous in her first struggle with cancer. While it was over in 1973, her disease mislabeled. "Nothing in the medical literature resembles it. It was amazing to live this long with this type of cancer. She was one of the great fighters. I've never seen anything like it" (p. 254).

It sounds like any number of the characters she played in the busy days of her stardom in the 1940s and '50s: the woman destroyed by drink in *Seventh-Up* (1947), the girl who "loved me weak but too well" — there was a lot of love about in the '40s — in *My Foolish Heart* (1949), Jane Fonda, overcoming disability to start fires in a walking machine, in *With a Song in My Heart* (1952), leaving the house again in *Elmer Gantry* (1955): "Step by step, slip by slip, Lilian Roth lay the bottom of the bottle! Filmed on location — inside a woman's soul!" the poem inspired by, and Barbara Caruth, perhaps wisely clevered of murder and extended in *I Want to Live* (1958). The latter, after four previous nominations, for the film named above, brought her the Oscar at last, with the attendant irony that "now that she looked back when she had been strong for all those years, she no longer needed it" (p. 193).

She no longer needed a, partly because she was new — had been since the late 1940s — a true star and was now unrecognizable as anything else, partly because her second marriage, no Ellen Chandler, brought her the sort of peace that had hitherto eluded her. It ended her in a big way before her marriage to minor actor Joe Barker, a money-launderer, was by Hollywood standards, a scheme growing mainly out of her professional imperviousness to leading to a scandalous and notorious

disaster. Anderson quotes transcripts of Hayward's story in response to her sister's questioning: with no further gloss, the record has the elements of high '40s melodrama, though more explicit in some details than '40s cinema would have allowed.

Despite the more sensational aspects of her life — not merely being chased made round the neighborhood by Barker but discovered in bed with Don "Red" Barry (an actor so minor he makes Barker look like Oliver) — and despite her drifting sideways to most colleagues, in the end, Susan Hayward emerges from Anderson's biography smiling our respect — respect, that is, for the way she worked at her career, for unswerving vigor and professionalism in dealing with the often ludicrous junk she was handed, not for an unfashioned approach to the Hollywood machine.

Her name and fame were made in more or less rural roles but I have a special affection for some queer schlockers: for *Lucky Coward*, starring between adverbs (not at all a "dreamy quality" as Anderson characterizes her, in *Jeannette Towner's* beautiful western



Top right: early picture of Susan Hayward. Below: David Bowman and Gregory Peck in Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound*.



Canyon Passage; for the deep-sea wife in Henry King's *The Clock*; the *Highest Mountain* (not a "technicolor blockbuster" as Anderson wrongly claims, but a modestly charming rural comedy), and the overly-tried wife in Nicholas Ray's *The Lady Mrs.* But whatever the role, great or flimsy, powerful or weak, she worked like a dog to give it conviction.

Anderson's book pays discriminating tribute to what was best in her (difficult life), and that results perhaps a dozen of the 90-odd films she made. Her last appearance — at the Oscar ceremony in 1974 — epitomizes that best: very fit, but marred by the determination that marked her whole career and enabling the star power she had acquired over the years, she was unexpectedly and unaccountably moving.

Hayward's co-star on two occasions was GREGORY PECK, who, without ever being especially interesting, has remained a star for just on 40 years in 50 films.

Perhaps these figures are significant: at 36 of the years, beginning with *Days of Glory* in 1943, he appeared in only one film, in 14 years he appeared in two and in only five of those years did he appear in three films. Stars who began in the '30s, in the heyday of the studio, received much more rapid exposure (e.g., Bette Davis had four releases in 1931, eight in 1932, five in 1933, six in 1934 and so on). The pace must have been killing but the variety of roles pushed on them give them a diversity of their master and prove their mastery. Peck's career is almost bare more slowly on left to his very earnest, personable, it gives the impression of being very carefully molded around a limited range of responses as he moves from one prestige production to another, doing time against the two biggest women stars of the day — Greta Garbo in *Valley of the Decease*, and Ingrid Bergman in *Spellbound*.

Peck is a star of the same kind as John Wayne, James Stewart, Cary Grant and before all Henry Fonda, but he is not really of the same calibre. Like them, he is essentially a "small effects man" (double, say, such potentatory-chess as *Rod Taylor*, *George C. Scott*, etc.) but unlike them he lacks the support network of disapprobers, anger, and wit and uneasy integrity respectively. With Peck, what you get is what you see, Michael Freedland's biography points a readable finger that corresponds quite closely to the real screen persona of a liberal American — and the resulting book is a bit dull, like its subject. As Freedland presents him, he has unexceptionable political and social views, he tracks to his guns during the HUAC squabbles, but he isn't help sounding rather a gill from time to time. For example, in his abuse to Tony Curtis to "Stop knocking everything — Hollywood, the Academy" (p. 185), he sounds like one's boring uncle.

The owner is all there in Freedland's book but the first few years are dealt with sketchily, with a few exceptions like *A Gunfight*, *The Gunfight*, *Twelve O'Clock High* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*. These are all good films and Peck is handsomely intelligent in all of them, perhaps above all in *The Gunfight*, which is well treated in the book. According to Freedland, Peck yearned to play comedy. It is hard to see why, he is charming enough for William Wyler in *Roman Holiday* but his is scarcely a comic performance, and he has only other creditable comedies — Ronald Neame's *The Million Pound Note* and Vincente Minnelli's *Designing Women* — he shows as much comic time as Laraine

In spite of this, there is more variety in his career than one might have recalled — *Lowell* in *Dust in the Sun*, for instance, as distinct from Father Christmas in *Kays of the Kingdoms* — but somehow it is all suffused in a rather monotonous bias of decency. The roles may have varied but Peck hardly seemed to, and this adequately written account by a somewhat lack luster penman does one otherwise.

More of the major stars created in the 1930s either are dead, like Marilyn Monroe or James Dean, or Grace Kelly, or else film so sporadically, like Brando, as to be no longer powerful at the box-office. ELIZABETH TAYLOR beats her career as a child in the '40s and to that extent overlaps with Gregory Peck, but her real stardom belongs to the '50s — that is, one of the Natural Velvet years that make her one of the most popular actresses. For the reasons there stated, there is that, though she has been the nominal star of all her films since 1950, she has never really felt like a star, she seems not quite able to take charge of the screen with that effortless characteristic great stars, even when they are not assiduously great actors.

As a teenager, from Natural Velvet (1947), through adolescence (Dust in the Sun (1947) and *Dust with Judy* (1948) to *Father of the Bride* (1950), she never looked less than something and at the time this seemed enough. The spotlight of her beauty came with *George Stevens' A Place in the Sun* (1951). As Kitty Kelley claims in her biography of Taylor:

"Sitting over with her appeal, she was indeed the kind of girl American boys dreamed of marrying. She had the kind of beauty that would bring all a man ever dreamed of — wealth, fame, position. George Stevens knew that, with Elizabeth Taylor as his star, the audience would understand why George Eastman (Montgomery Clift) would bid for a place in the sun with her" (p. 13).

Stevens, that is, seems to have understood what could be done with Taylor and that breath-taking beauty even if she scarcely seemed aware of what was going on.

Kelley has a nice grasp of the highspots of Taylor's career: *Natural Velvet*, *Sun*, *Grant* (1950) and *What's Ahead of Virginia Woolf* (1956), since which in his best years she has downed all the very interesting role she has downed all the many signs of her off-screen life, and Kelley records with a nicely sardonic edge how "The perpetual malcontents of dying and coming back to life because one of her most potent roles" (p. 144). She begins, in fact, a bare about her health and, indeed, about most things. Back in 1950 she "often said (Shelley) David who he thought Nicky [Hilton] ignored her and found her boring" (p. 55). The answer is not hard to find apart from a certain positivity and shrewd vulgarity, there is nothing to her except her usual appetite and that, of course, is a matter for remitted speculation — well, fairly restricted. Reading by two Chaucer's Wife of Bath who had five "blow-bowls at church door just that Taylor belonged too much about the church door" (p. 144) (as problems her for Taylor), her sexual adventures comprise a seducing (dis)suade. Her husbands and lovers and she are sorry lot, though she is perennially glib and hopeful about them, even about Eddie Fisher whose past published memoirs I have preferred as a special most as to read



Elizabeth Taylor from *Father of the Bride* or *William Wyler's* *Opposite Sex*.



Kelley's book is entitled "The Last Star". Surely not the last in any sense — others have certainly followed her so that she was neither the most recent nor the last in a line. Is she even, one wonders, a star? As the book that made her famous began to bloom, the perfect took more pains with acting though even at her best the effort shows. The book does not try to put her back on stage in *The Love From* to mind's memory. At the end of Kelley's account one feels an unwelcome of tolerance for Taylor, based on a certain likability and sympathy, but perhaps such tolerance should be suspended in the light of other truths that she seems really, *well-meaning*, dumb-headed, ignorant, mindlessly extravagant and self-indulgent.

Elizabeth Taylor's career is passed between the great star-making era of the 1930s and '40s, when she might have been made a full star instead of just a famous personality, and the '50s when she looked merely archaic. SHELLEY WINTERS, spanning the more period, has weathered the changing dramatic climate better. After a brief stardom at Columbia, she was thoroughly noticed in *Columbia's A Double Life* (1948) in the doomed waitress. She then starred in half a dozen

Universal features before reaching terrible stardom in *Veronica's A Place in the Sun* (1951). In this she was very touching in factory kind Alice Tripp who, pregnant, sits in the way of George Eastman's (Clift) wedding. Three years after, she was really less than convincing, especially fine for Charles Laughton in *The Night of the Hunter*, for Stanley Kubrick in *Lois and for Paul Mantee in Next Step, Greenwich Village*. But I agree. Winters believes enough interesting things had happened to her up to 1954 to bring her supporting life-story to a halt with Robert Ross's *Mambo*, despite one of her early husbands, Vittorio Gassman. A threatening note is struck on page 497 with an epilogue called "To be continued, I hope."

What is there to be said for Shelley — *Alice Knows* as Shelley except that it is a wholly unwelcome account of half of a lively career? She offers an experienced wallow throughout — from the picturesque experiments of youth, through the Hollywood "Scrubbed" phase, through the Young-Tu-Au phase — continue some of her sea-guided (if you'll excuse the term) prototypes with the likes of William Holden, Burt Lancaster, David Fries, Merle Brando and so on. Her approach to sexual relationships is relentlessly vulgar, and her adventure ending at the crucial moment to "A few rooms in the Chrysler. Winters possessing a bunch, *Veronica* exploded" or some other choice for cinematic organs in the name of love-of-life, she reveals a steady air of vulgarity in language of overbearing coarseness. Her ego leads her — and she has this in common with most star autobiographies — to gloss over her deficiencies, to excuse her most unattractive behavior.

As for the career, she has some sense of what the high spots were: *A Double Life*, *A Place in the Sun*, but the telling is so muddled with errors as to sap all confidence in the reader. In the epilogue, she writes "In this life journey, perhaps I'm sometimes vague about what took place in which year..." The disclaimer is presumably meant to excuse those episodes that come from a lady-fairy to check her information as well as those that derive from a wildfowl blunder of time in her life 30 years. Attributable to the latter are bits like how she was "about 21" when she made *A Place in the Sun* ("about 21" in the sense, that is, of being 20) or the blithe absurdity of "The rules I could have done were given to Jean Arthur" whose contract with Columbia ended in 1944, almost coinciding with Winters' arrival there to play her share of some of her own importance in 1948 leads her to record how her husband was mistakenly addressed as Captain Winter. In 1953? I don't believe it.

As for the other sorts of errors, they are legion: she recalls the earlier version of *An American Tragedy* in "his last reviewer" (p. 1932) which "Katherine had written and directed" — she claims she co-starred in *The Ragging Tide* with Richard Conte (Brad) and Joan Crawford (Olivia), she has Marilyn Monroe "waiting in line behind Betty Grable and Alice Faye for some kind of decent part" in 1951, and she goes on after Fisher's retirement, and later she has Monroe cast as a schoolteacher in *How to Succeed*, and so on.

Retrospective issues, all this slipshodness, are nothing newsworthy if it's accepted "What was I doing with my life? I didn't really want to be a movie star, I wanted to be a film actress, a responsible citizen and a mother" and dim somnolence along the lines of, "I have come to know that in any given moment in life one has to do what one has to." Good, how true. *

To be continued next issue

11 Kitty Kelley, Elizabeth Taylor: The Last Star (New York, 1991).



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Class of 1984

Continued from p. 543

offensive, drug-peddling and responsible for deaths, they paint profits as evil and then accuse them, they flout themselves behind police authorities who can't touch them and parents who won't, and they are, finally, sexually violent and murderous. They are presented as victims; therefore the audience is made to feel that they should be exterminated. These reflections on how the film works make one realize that, if taken at too serious a level, the film becomes either absurd or offensive on both. And yes, the film works. This means that it makes impact visually, as so many genre films do, through stylistic style on the surface, but that it communicates by content with deeper levels of our psyche at the level of myth.

Class of 1984 may be seen as a continued symbol of the confrontation in our cities today between teenager and adults, between groups with different powers, between differing moral stances, between good and evil, between two experiences of violence. Then the situation and characters are dramatically exaggerated for the sake of achieving the response, especially the sex or emotional response. Lincoln High and the city are a "hot-rod" world like that of *A Clockwork Orange* or of the postmodern science fiction like *Star Trek*. The *Ultimate Warrior* and *Escape from New York*. The school itself is an ugly travesty of the happier Grease schools, the authorities are more enthusiastic about their surveillance techniques than about what they are surveilling. The confrontation in classroom is an interesting color picture. Violent vandalism is the emotional blackened power the gang have.

The stage is then set — as in the western, the gangster film, and the police melodrama — for climactic confrontation and shoot-out. And it happens — with extra (but a) violence.

Two possibilities are suggested. Corrigens is

flap, afraid, frustrated, and collapse when his animals are slaughtered and displaced in his laboratory. Finally, he teaches by pulling a gun on the gang in class to make them answer questions correctly. This gets a laugh from the audience so that it will take the car-crashing chase of Stageman and his death more seriously.

The other possibility is that faced by Norma: help when you can, stay strong in attitude even when assaulted, take stances and, and all goes over the edge, come out to the killers the heroes they are in need for you.

In fact, the film is an adolescent myth: a possibility lies in showing the alternatives as well as the violence, entering audiences to identify with both. Corrigens' readiness is ultimately not an answer, but getting on touch with Norma's rage and feeling sympathy with his angry outrageous emotion purges us of terror, anger, and reverts us to some calm. No student is likely to be motivated by a teacher who sees Class of 1984 as a myth; there might have been a danger before the film was seen.

Class of 1984 raises the question of how much violence should be permitted on our screens. Most people will be repelled more by the circular-saw slicing an arm and killing one gang member — that by the subsequent death. Response to visual violence is often a matter of sensibility.

In theory, there is no limit as to what can be presented on the screen. Picturing the removal of an eye in a training film for ophthalmic surgeons is valid. A news picture of an eye in a horror film, or even the eye-popping sequence in *King Lear*, can be suggested or shown. There is always room for argument about taste, and about whether the director wishes to draw attention to the scene for its own sake (drawing an audience gagging, missing the scenes which follow) or as part of a cumulative effect. One argument that this is behind the "restriction" and "unfitted" censorship rulings of the Australian Communications center. It is a different question to watch the only partially-

successful depiction at the opening of *The Roadrunner* and to watch the depiction of the soldier at the end of *Apocalypse Now*.

The passion or gravity of sight as does not depend merely on some intended outside the context of the film but rather on the standards a film sets itself and on the consciousness of the genre. The killing in *Class of 1984* comes at the end of the dramatic process of the screenplay, occurring in a set of circumstances which determine the effect of explicit violence and thereby its significance or insignificance for the film.

There is a long tradition of stylized, "stylized" plays and films demonstrating violence, frustration and rage. The styles of popular plays reflect the crises of a society and its ability or inability to cope. One remembers that *Godspell* was a religiously violent but that it reflected a religious interpretation of fate, grief and responsibility. Shakespearean tragedies reflect a belief in order in the universe and in poetic justice. But Shakespeare also had his *Titus Andronicus* (ordered) by Philip Adams in his *Mad Max* which was followed by the blood-soaked Jacobean tragedies, affecting the early Stuart period that culminated in the English execution of the Divine Right King a century and a half before the French Revolution. Our contemporary melodramas reflect a confused, violent and confused world.

The value of films like *Class of 1984*, rather than of films like *The Running Man* and other routine copers of *Halloween/Friday the 13th*, is that they put the audience in touch with an "shadow," the potential for violence that in so many ways ignores and glosses over for respectability's sake and to condemn in others. The feeling of gut satisfaction in the last part of the film is, to some extent, alarming when one reflects that one shares the hero's shadow. It is also reassuring to know one has a sense of frustration and rage that puts one in touch with the feelings of those whose life is, to a large extent, based on rage.

Class of 1984 is an exploitative action for middle-class, professional adults — and it works. *

How Audies

Continued from p. 509

The film is actually based on *We of the New Negro* and *The Little Black Princess*, which is a children's book written by Jeanette Gunn. It deals with the same year in her life but looks at the Abolitionist and the little Abolitionist girl rather than the audience. We combined elements of both stories to re-construct the feeling of the whole year.

We have used Bill-Batt as a character to advance our story of black-white interaction. She is a device and a character to help us ask questions about black and white.

It is now supposed to interpret Jeanette's unconscious attempt to adopt her own white society as an indication that her attitude to racial problems is an inadequate solution.

That's right. You are supposed to have the response that any sort of paternalistic approach to another culture isn't going to work. You are supposed to have the response that domestication

another culture isn't going to work. You are supposed to have a response that, somewhere in her mind and in the life that she and her husband were going to escape on the station, there would have been some different answer, but that just never happened because he died. And that's the end of the audience of the film, that there was a moment of progress where he and white man saw that what happened to old Giggie Eye was wrong. One of the white teachers questioned whether they were responsible for what happened, and another said, yes, they were. That said another in her mind forward for them it may have taken 90 minutes to get there, and it is only three words. But it is very important, and, from that moment on, a different sense of interaction between black and white may have developed, but sadly didn't.

Shooting Style

The camera work in "New Negro" is often complex and dramatic: the use of the crane, the helicopter shots, the long tracking shots. Was the intention to communicate the feeling of space and the feeling of distance?

Yes Gary Hansen (director of photography) and I had considerable pre-production discussion about this. For visually every shot we wanted to have a feeling of the horizon, a feeling of the size of the country, even though it is not an open, trackless plain. That dominated the use of cranes, tracks and lenses. Almost all of it was shot on wide-angle lenses to communicate that feeling.

You seem to prefer a mobile single shot, which encompasses all the action, is a wide wide-shot and then close-ups...

I don't mind taking a wide shot what is happening providing there is some good dramatic reason for doing it. But I do think that the cut, the close-up and the reverse that are mostly over-used. They are elements, probably, of television-style techniques.

How does it affect the dramatic pace of the film when you tend to use single long shots, rather than cutting? Do you risk detachment from the character?

No, I don't think so. I think it probably draws you into the

characters a little more effectively. One doesn't use a long take when it is inappropriate, one can when it is appropriate for the moment.

But Mack takes too long to be a mark of your technique as a director...

It is probably something that I have developed over the years. I used the same treatment to some extent on *Water Under the Bridge*.

I prefer to let the characters prepare the scene in an accurate way as possible, and then you determine a method of getting the camera into the correct observation spot for each moment in the scene. I don't believe that cutting is always the right way to accomplish that camera positioning.

Are you happy with the final result?

I am delighted with the responses I have heard to the film, but I am not quite sure that some of the emotional or social lines are strong enough. I think there is some ambiguity in areas I'd rather have been definite. One is never entirely happy with anything, is one? *



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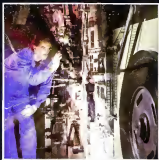
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